

TOTAL FILM AND SFX PRESENT

80s MOVIES

THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION

BACK TO THE FUTURE
GHOSTBUSTERS
STAR WARS
AND BEYOND...



THE HEROES! THE HITS! THE HAIR!
Your guide to the greatest decade in movies

Digital
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FOURTH
EDITION

FEATURING
THE TERMINATOR • GREMLINS
BILL MURRAY • THE BREAKFAST CLUB
RAMBO • LABYRINTH • THE LOST BOYS
FREDDY KRUEGER • ROBOCOP
THE GOONIES • E.T. **AND MORE...**



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Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

80s Movies: The Ultimate Celebration Fourth Edition
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WELCOME

Between ghostbusting funny guys, gun-toting space heroines, muscle-bound action men and teenagers skidding around in their pants, there's no question that the 1980s was the decade of fun. It began with *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back* and it ended with Batman swooping into Gotham while Indy whip-cracked his last crusade (for a while, anyway). Along the way there were rocking anthems, pioneering special effects and screaming campers – and just take a look at the names.

Thanks to the likes of Steven Spielberg, Sigourney Weaver, John Hughes, James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger, movie-goers were well and truly spoilt for choice. They ensured that the '80s boasted some of the most memorable cinematic moments ever. Who can forget the time Han Solo told Princess Leia "I know", or Molly Ringwald stepped out wearing *that* prom dress, or Marty McFly revved a DeLorean up to 88mph?

With the '80s as popular now as they ever were, come with us as we head back in time to take a look at some of the coolest, funniest, scariest and downright weirdest movies of the 1980s. Where we're going, we don't need roads...



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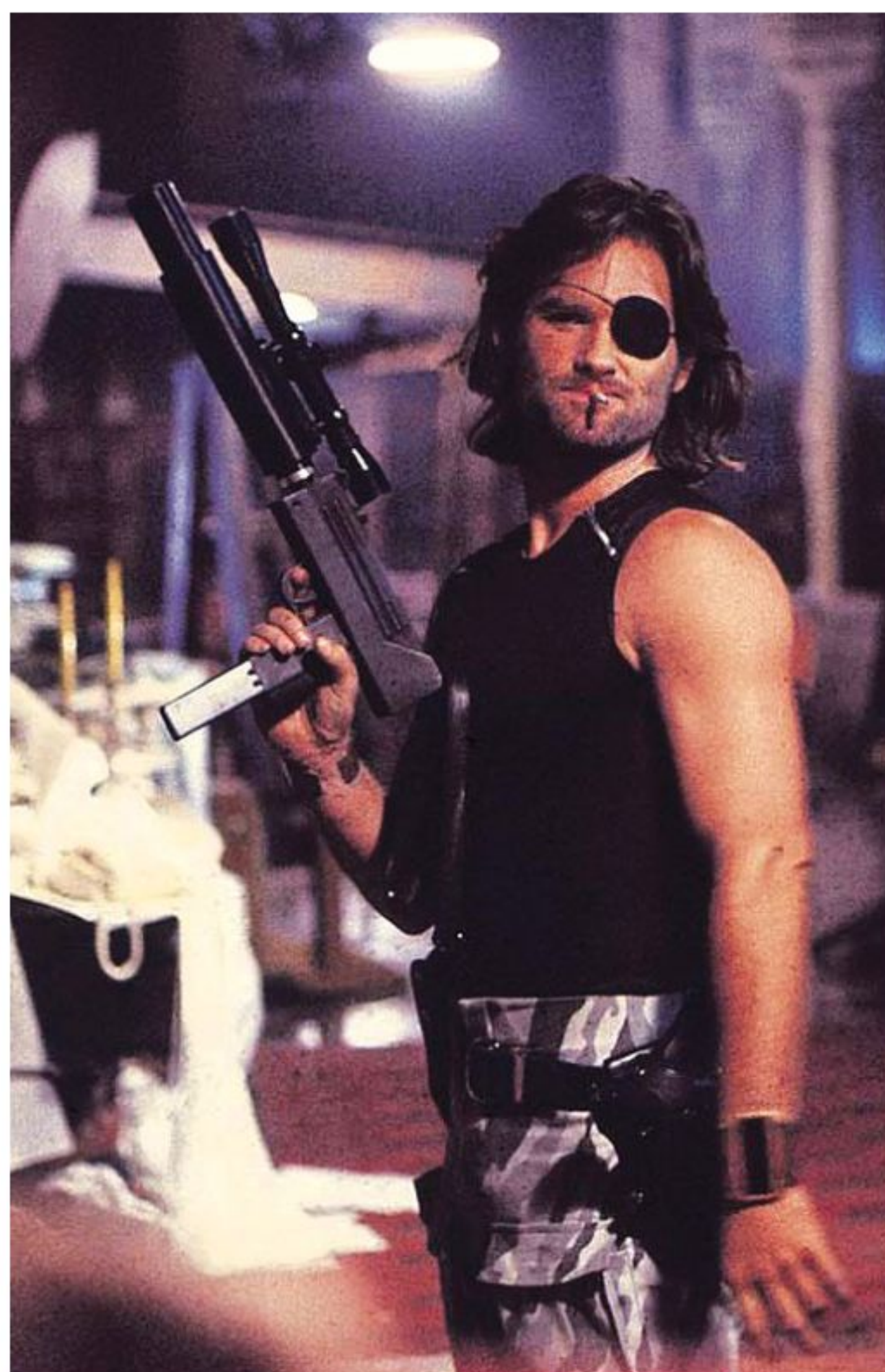


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We *love* the



Boomboxes, raiders of lost arks, teenage kicks and wars amongst the stars... After the auteur-heavy 1970s, the fun-filled '80s ushered in some of the coolest, weirdest, most memorable movies ever projected onto cinema screens. It was time for the age of the High Concept...

WORDS **MATT GLASBY**

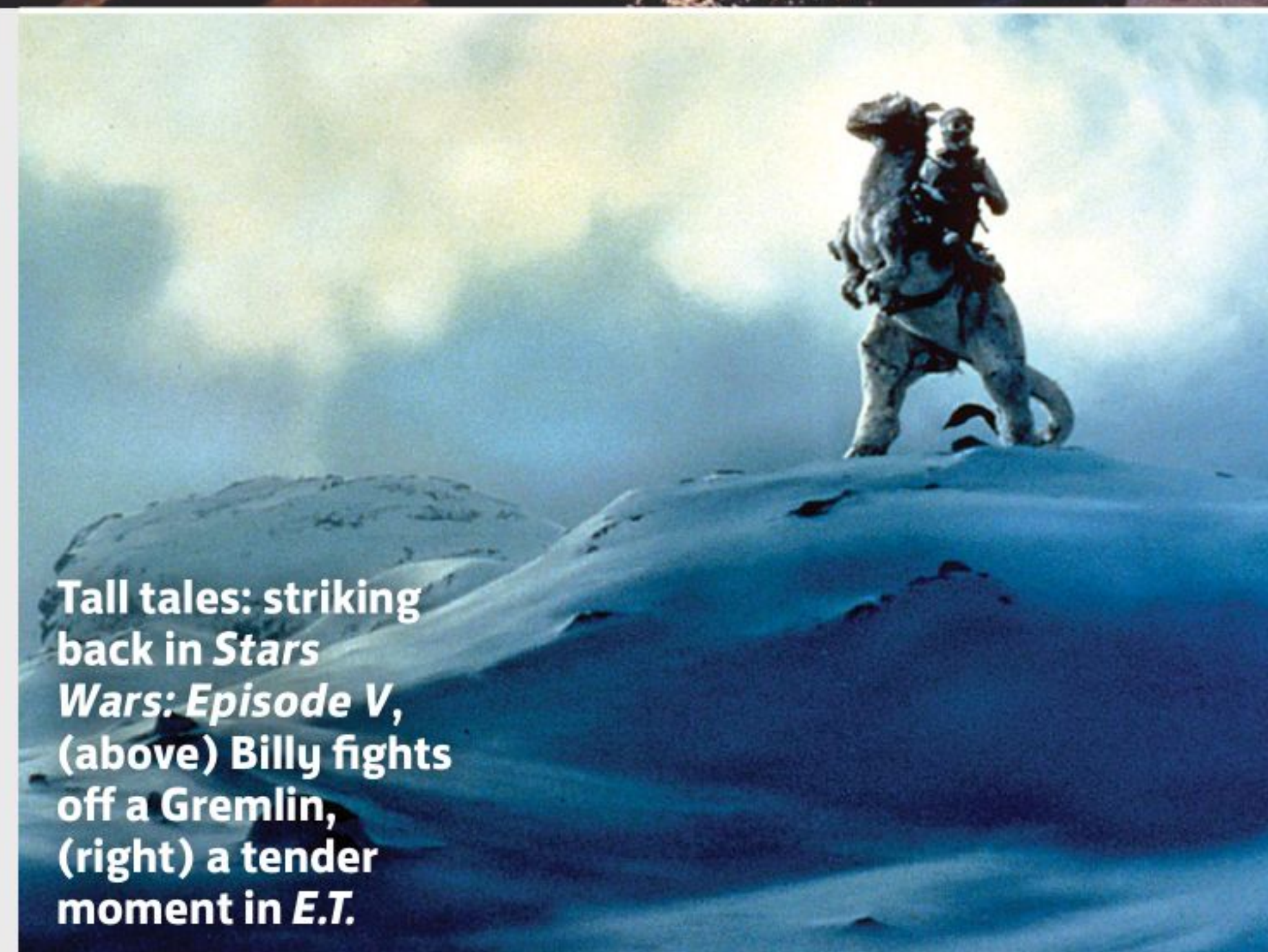


At the end of the 1970s a funny thing happened... The 1980s. A body-popping, body-swapping, dress-up montage of a decade where the need was for speed, pain didn't hurt and lunch was most definitely for wimps. It was Indie and Inigo, Ripley and Rambo, John McClane and Mr Miyagi. It was a power chord blowing us across the room; a boombox held aloft, whether by Lloyd Dobler or Radio Raheem; a Kuwahara BMX silhouetted by the moon. It was Guttenberg, Danson and Selleck sharing an apartment; the two – count 'em – Coreys sharing a bill; the era in which, honey, we shrank the kids, shagged the dance instructor and Ferris Bueller decided to take a day off. It was, in short, one of the strangest and most entertaining in film.

"Was there any better time to be young and thrill hungry and going to the movies?" asks Tom Shone in his brilliant popcorn polemic *Blockbuster*. "What a grand piece of historical luck it was to be in your teens when *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* (1981) came out – when Spielberg and

Lucas were in their prime, and when the very act of going to the movies seemed to come with its own brassily rousing John Williams score." By contrast, David Thomson dubbed it "the worst decade Hollywood has ever had". Perhaps it's best thought of like your own youth: you can bang on forever about how great it was, dismiss it like an ill-advised childhood haircut, or, our choice, simply look back and marvel...

The main reason critics are so sniffy about 1980s Hollywood is that they see it as a regressive repudiation of the complex, auteur-driven films of the 1970s, as if the cast of *Footloose* (1984) had trampled all over the negatives of *The Godfather* (1972), *Chinatown* (1974) and *Taxi Driver* (1976).



Tall tales: striking back in *Star Wars: Episode V*, (above) Billy fights off a Gremlin, (right) a tender moment in *E.T.*





Time team:
Marty (Michael
J. Fox) and Doc
(Christopher
Lloyd) in *Back
To The Future*

But this isn't quite fair. The 1970s was, after all, the era in which audiences flocked to such thematically weighty works as *Love Story* (1970), *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and *Smokey And The Bandit* (1977). "If directors had reigned in the 1970s, studio executives and producers dominated the 1980s and 1990s," said author Peter Biskind – also not quite true.

It was two celluloid-smitten film-makers who dominated the 1980s: Steven Allan Spielberg and George Walton Lucas. Between them they made seven of the decade's top-10 earners (*E.T. The Extraterrestrial* [1982], two *Star Wars* sequels [1980 and 1983], three *Indiana Jones* adventures [1981, 1984 and 1989], and *Back To The Future* [1985]), not to mention numerous secondary projects with their fingerprints all over them: *Poltergeist* (1982), *Gremlins* (1984) and *The Goonies* (1985) for Spielberg; *Labyrinth* (1986) and *Willow* (1988) for Lucas.

It wasn't the suits that took over the asylum – not yet – it was the nerds, crafting sophisticated, supercharged entertainments with love and skill. "Steven and I come from the visceral generation..." said Lucas. "We enjoyed the emotional highs we got from movies and realised that you could crank up

'IT WASN'T THE SUITS THAT TOOK OVER THE ASYLUM, IT WAS THE NERDS, WHO CRAFTED SUPERCHARGED ENTERTAINMENTS WITH LOVE AND SKILL'

the adrenaline to a level way beyond what people were doing." And how.

Adrenaline wasn't the only thing being cranked up. The number of releases per year tripled from 161 in 1980 to 502 in 1989, budgets more than doubled from an average \$9.4m to \$23.4m, and ticket sales swelled, despite the growing popularity of VHS and laserdiscs. In short, more people were watching more films in more ways than ever before, hence there was room for directors as diverse as Spike Lee, David Lynch, the Coens and Katherine Bigelow to flourish. John Carpenter described shape-shifting sci-fi *The Thing* (1982) as "the exact opposite of *E.T.*". David Cronenberg, who made five great movies in 10 years, might have called his mind-bending *Videodrome*

(1983) "the exact opposite of pretty much everything". But people don't think of these as "1980s movies", simply "movies".

When people try to encapsulate the excesses of the era, they often refer to the works of independent producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, which were high of concept, energy and camp. From their first hit, *Flashdance* (1983), to the bubble-bursting *Days Of Thunder* (1990), they chewed up and spat out films we'd all seen before into easy-to-swallow soundbites and setpieces. The stratospherically homoerotic *Top Gun* (1986) – or *Star Wars* in planes – was

inspired by a photograph from a magazine and not much more multi-dimensional. "It was two guys in leather jackets and sunglasses standing in front of the biggest, fastest fucking airplane you ever saw in your life!" enthused >>



REWIND



High flyers: Tom Cruise jets off in *Top Gun*, (right) aboard the Millennium Falcon



Chip Proser, one of a conveyor belt of writers involved in this exclamation mark of a movie. Needless to say, ticket sales were more forthcoming than the Oscar nominations.

But the formula worked. Simpson and Bruckheimer served up, in critic John Patterson's words, "big guns, big government, big bangs and big tits" as readily as Simpson chowed ice cream, peanut butter and cocaine, and their work became a shorthand for movies intended as revenue streams rather than artworks. 'Merchandise' became a verb. Product placement was rife in everything from *E.T.*, which sent sales of Reese's Pieces through the roof, to *E.T.* rip-off *Mac & Me* (1988), which didn't quite manage the same feat for McDonald's. Sugar-rush soundtracks flooded the charts, replaying the greatest moments of already bowdlerised films one track at a time. Multinational corporations took control of the studios (slyly dramatised in *Die Hard* [1988]), and became ever keener to create can't-lose event movies, no matter what the quality. Some, such as Spielberg and Lucas's efforts, were brilliant; others (the *Police Academy* sequels [1985-1994] say) were balls. But even these, in their own hallucinatory way, came to reflect the conservative, acquisitive America of the Reagan era.

A former Warner Bros contract player who appeared alongside the likes of Bogie (in *Dark*

Victory [1939]) and Bonzo The Chimp (in *Bedtime For Bonzo* [1951]), Ronald Reagan's greatest role was as America's tough, intractable 40th president during the height of the cold war (1981-1989). "Who's vice president?" asked *Back To The Future's* shock-haired savant Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) from 1955. "Jerry Lewis?" But Reagan wasn't the only no-nonsense actor trading star power for political power. Clint Eastwood became mayor of Carmel, California, in 1986; Arnold Schwarzenegger ended up governor of the state, and most of the cast of *Predator* (1987) followed his lead. Reagan's hard-nosed patriotism bled back out onto the big-screen, too, mobilising the monosyllabic one-man-armies played by Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris. Like Reagan, '80s action heroes had to be strong and certain, no matter whether they could act or not. It's no accident that Arnie's best role was as The Terminator (in 1984), a literal killing machine, or that Stallone's *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), refought Vietnam and won.

Reaganite "entertainment tells us to forget our troubles and get happy" says writer Andrew Britton, and it did so spectacularly. "Which do you really remember: the Falklands War, or E.T.?" asked Melissa Mathison, although she did have a vested interest in the latter, having scripted it.



It was an era awash with wish-fulfillment. Anyone could make it in America, whether they hailed from Australia (*Crocodile Dundee* [1986]), Zamunda (*Coming To America* [1988]), or outer space (you name it); female welders turned themselves into ballet dancers at the drop of a writer; and an Austrian bodybuilder with an accent broader than a stormtrooper's blindspot became the world's biggest – and perhaps last – action hero.

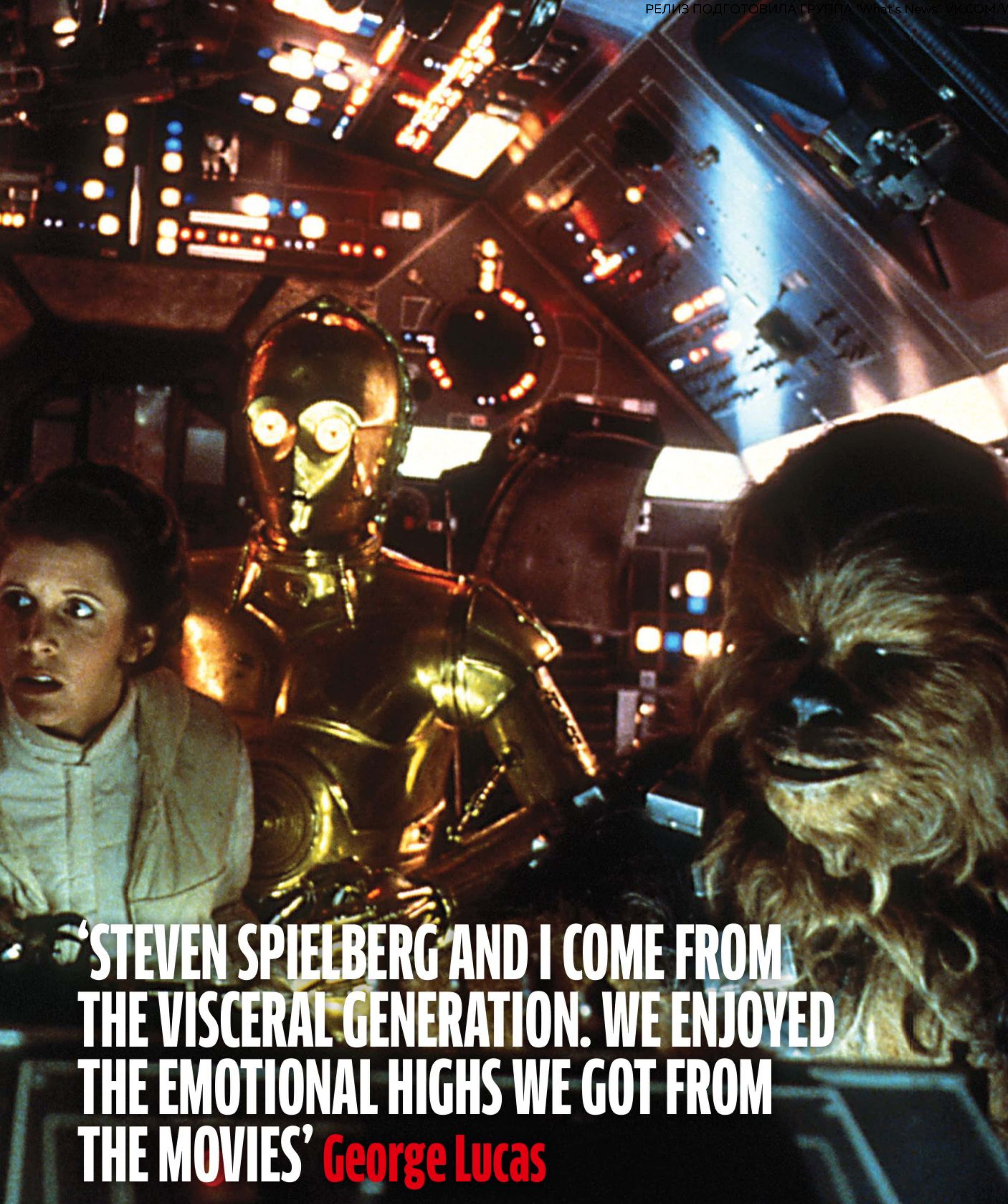
But the best films broke our hearts at the same time as beguiling us. Stephen King and Steven Spielberg were the good cop/bad cop team of 1980s childhoods – indeed, the tragic, wistful *Stand By Me* (1986) could be *The Goonies'* (1985) dark twin, featuring, as they do, imperilled pre-

teens on a doomed-seeming mission at the sharp end of innocence. Elsewhere, John Hughes' high-school flicks such as *The Breakfast Club* (1985) featured genuine despair amid the dance sequences. Although marketed towards children, 1980s films were often terrifyingly adult –



Fight club: Bruce Willis in *Die Hard*, (right) The Goonies go treasure hunting





what exactly did *Labyrinth's* Goblin King Jareth (David Bowie) want with 15-year-old Sarah (Jennifer Connelly) and her baby brother? And why wasn't he wearing proper trousers?

Luke Skywalker may have discovered who his father was (spoilers), but the rest of the movie world seemed fraught with parental panic. Absent dads proliferate in Spielberg's work, while *Three Men And A Baby* (1987) revolves around a chillingly missing mum. Youngsters were lost in space in *Explorers* (1985), *SpaceCamp* (1986) and *Flight Of The Navigator* (1985). Poor Marty McFly may have eschewed roads, but he could probably use a few shrink sessions after cuckolding his old man. Even the yuppie films had their flip sides – for every empowering *Working Girl* (1988), an anxious *Fatal Attraction* (1987); for every *Secret Of My Success* (1987), a *Wall Street* (1987).

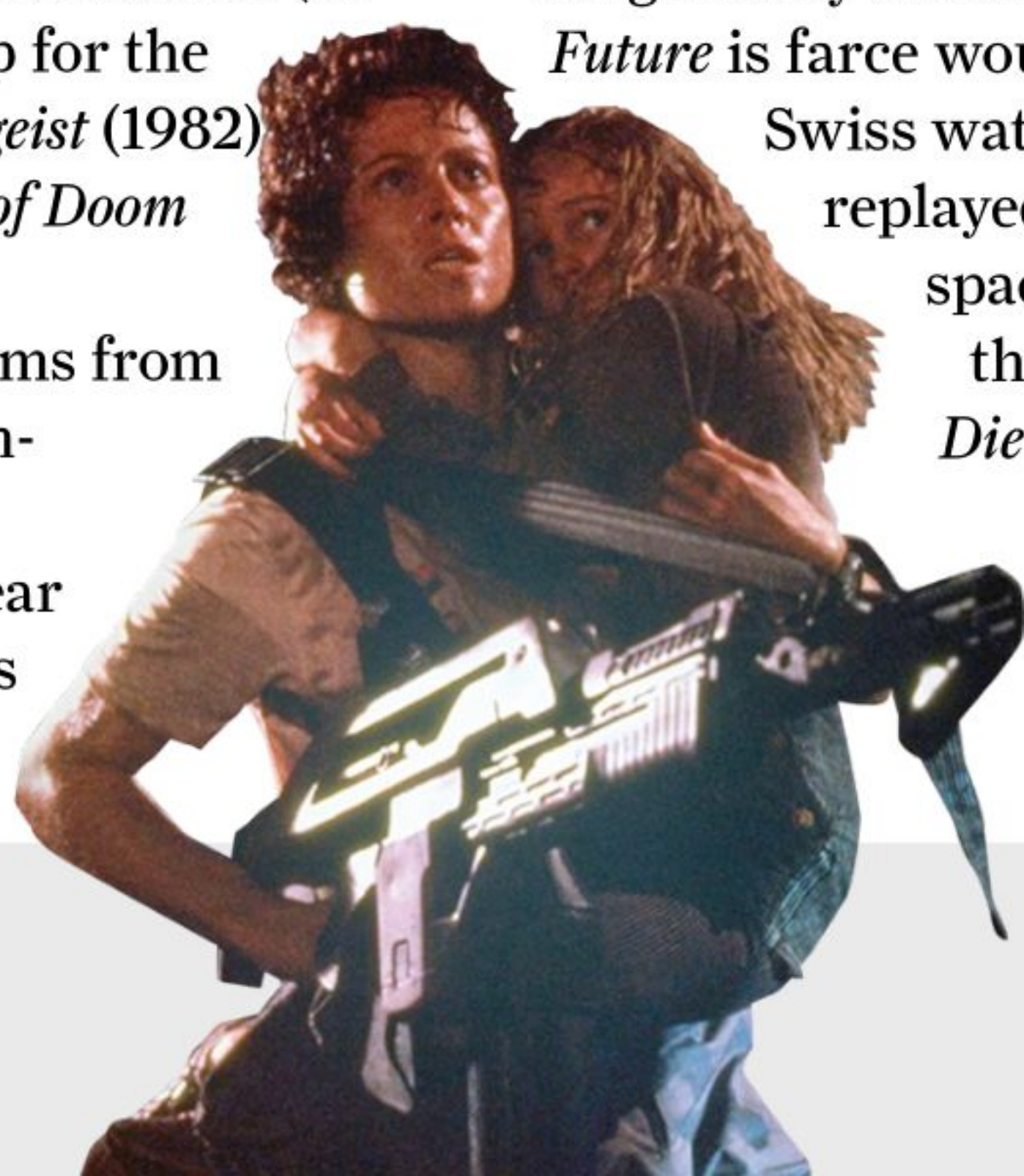
The PG-13 certificate was created in 1984 (at Spielberg's suggestion) to make up for the violence in the PG-rated (!) *Poltergeist* (1982) and *Indiana Jones And The Temple of Doom* (1984). But that didn't stop other supposedly child-centric 1980s films from being gleefully, cherishably, melon-farmingly filthy. The heroes of *Ghostbusters* (1984) smoke and swear like truckers, and the film features *two* entirely uncalled for oral sex

jokes. Meanwhile, *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983) posits the self-searching (and, to British ears, highly confusing) question, "Do you ever bop your baloney?" Anything with Eddie Murphy in it required a swear jar, or a dictionary. The line between children's and adults films was blurred in a way that beggars belief now, but keeps the 1980s blockbusters endlessly rewatchable in a way their wipe-clean 1990s counterparts aren't.

At their best, the smartest films of the era combined 1970s anarchy with the SFX, budgets and broad horizons of the new decade. The likes of *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, *Terminator*, *Back To The Future*, *Aliens* (1986) and *Die Hard* feinted towards high-concept, but were much richer and more fulfilling than a 15-word pitch. As an example of roller-coaster cinema, *Raiders* has rarely been matched. *Terminator* still feels dangerously breakneck. *Back To The Future* is farce wound tight as a Swiss watch. *Aliens* replayed Vietnam in space, improving on the original. While *Die Hard*, in John Patterson's words, was "the *Jaws* of the 1980s:

a perfectly engineered entertainment". These were whooping event movies that still feel massive today. Try turning them off when you catch them on late-night TV.

Journalist Hadley Freeman recalls, "Rick Moranis once told me: 'I still get stopped in the street by people who ask, "Why don't they make movies like they did in the 1980s?" And I don't really know the answer.'" The point is not that people tirelessly return to the films of their youths, but that people still stop Rick Moranis on the street. Don't know who he is? Where have you been?! 📺



COUNTDOWN

20 BEST FILMS OF THE '80s

Slick cyborgs, killer teens and alien-vaporising heroines – these are the films that made the decade...



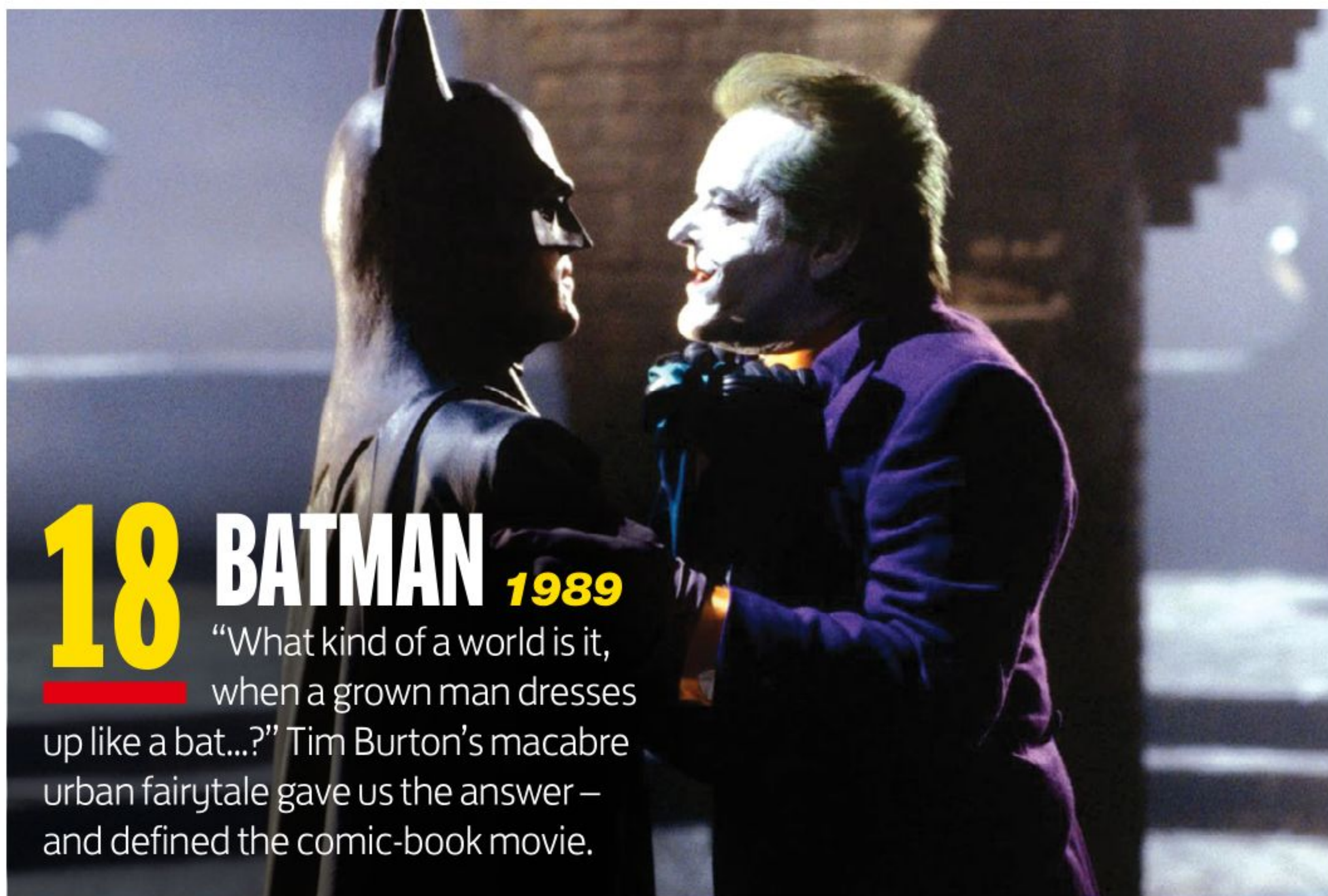
20 SCARFACE 1983

Brian De Palma's blood-red, cocaine-white upgrade of Howard Hawks' 1932 gangster pic reeks of excess. It's the story of the ferocious rise of Tony Montana (Al Pacino) from Cuban dishwasher to Miami drug lord, his ruthless ambition earning him a coke empire, horrid '80s suits and ice-queen Elvira (Michelle Pfeiffer). But the American Dream chimes hollow in De Palma's violent gangster epic, in which the director jettisoned his Hitchcockian-homaging stylistics and settled for pure, bravura moviemaking. As for Pacino, he's over-the-top and down the other side, embracing Montana with a performance bordering on terrifying comedy. Whether ranting in his chewy Coon accent or plunging face-first into a mountain of cocaine, he flies sky-high on his own intensity.



19 HEATHERS 1988

Smart-mouthed Winona Ryder joins killer student Christian Slater in this high-school black comedy. Diablo Cody will spend her life wishing she'd written it...



18 BATMAN 1989

"What kind of a world is it, when a grown man dresses up like a bat...?" Tim Burton's macabre urban fairytale gave us the answer – and defined the comic-book movie.

17 THE SHINING 1980

"Heeeeeere's Johnny!" The tale of a writer (Jack Nicholson) who goes potty while holed up at a closed mountain hotel, *The Shining* fixed its leading man's star wattage and boasted some of cinema's most iconic images (the bloody lift, the Steadicam tricycle shot). Stanley Kubrick's perfectionism may have taken its toll on the small cast – most of all on Shelly Duvall – but he created a blood-chilling psychological horror classic.



16 THE GOONIES 1985

"Indiana Jones for kids" thinks writer Chris Columbus, who cheekily rattles together smart kids, dumb outlaws, a treasure map, some booby traps and a loveable monster. This classic adventure worked like a charm, produced by Steven Spielberg and going to even darker places than his *Temple Of Doom*. Which is really saying something.

15 ROBOCOP 1987

Paul Verhoeven's smart, subversive, violent sci-fier rewires *Terminator*, *Blade Runner*, *Frankenstein* and *The Bible* as a Detroit cop (Peter Weller) is reborn as a cyborg law-enforcer.



COUNTDOWN

14 PREDATOR

1987

The Terminator, Apollo Creed and real-life 'Nam vets fight for survival against a deadly beast from another world in John McTiernan's actioner, a battle of the sexes for alpha-males and the original Expendables.



13 THE BREAKFAST CLUB

1985

Perfectly cast in John Hughes' '80s teen talker, the Brat Pack share detention with so much attitude you see why this was their defining moment.

12 THE LOST BOYS

1987

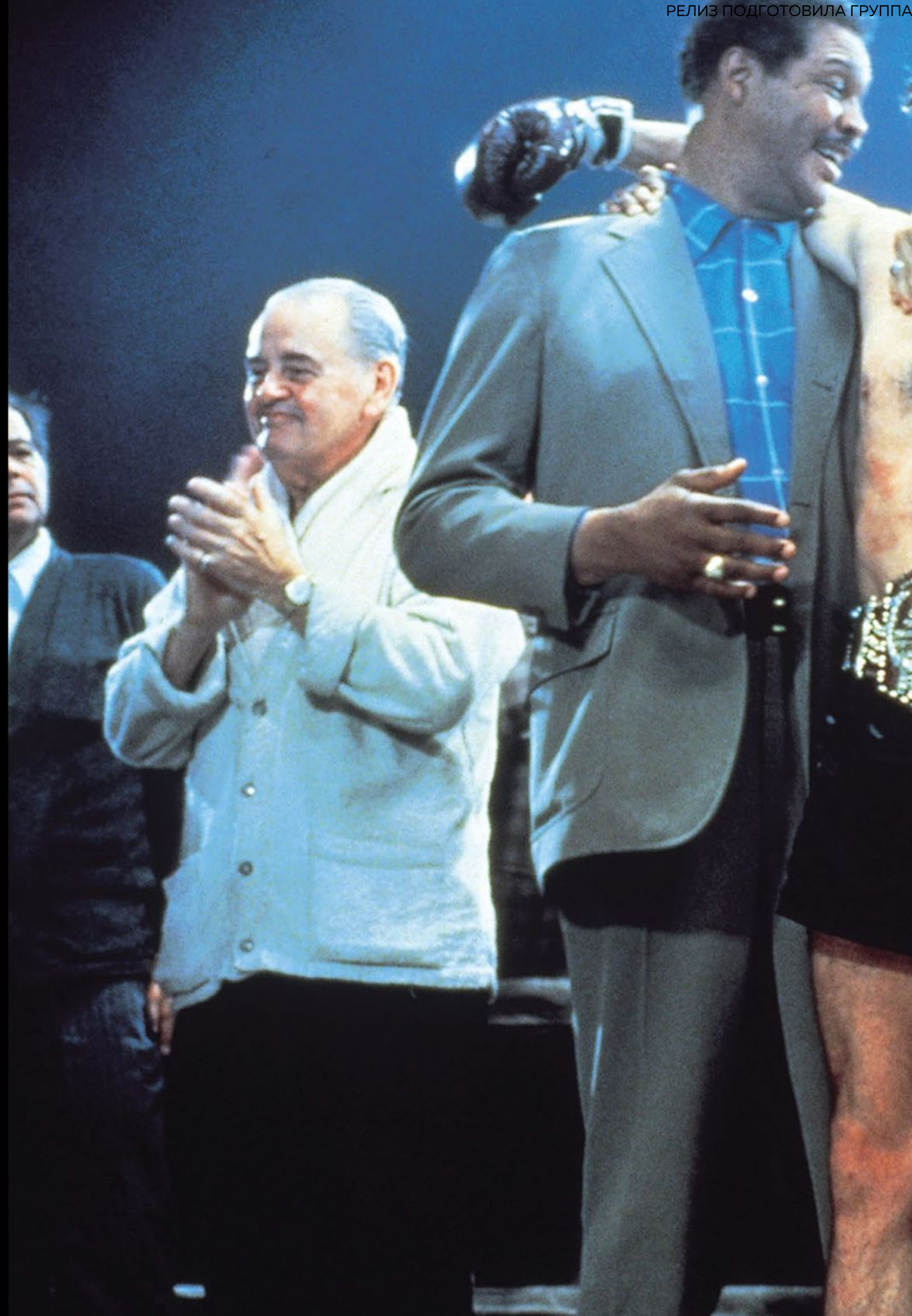
"Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old." Joel Schumacher's teen vampire flick rocks out to its thumping '80s soundtrack, and a modern genre classic was born.



11 STAND BY ME

1986

"Suck my fat one!" Between childhood and death, there's aching nostalgia. No movie ever captured that better, as Stephen King's lost boys go looking for a body but find a whole lot more. Rob Reiner's coming-of-age drama is the ultimate sleeper hit; poignant, astute, thrilling and emotional, the film sings because it's so damn personal. It's also unbearably moving, the senseless death of one character given additional resonance by the 1993 demise of River Phoenix, the actor who played him.



10 RAGING BULL 1980

Warping a biopic of nasty pug Jake La Motta into a character study of violent self-loathing and paranoia, Scorsese, Schrader and De Niro collide at their peaks. This tops many critics' lists as the best film of the entire decade, and Scorsese's blistering biopic about 1949 middleweight champ is no slouch. From the bone-shuddering fight scenes and Robert De Niro's malleable torso, it's a phenomenal achievement. Like all great sports movies, it uses boxing as a backdrop, exploring its protag's masculinity through unflinching scenes of domestic violence. This bull(y) doesn't need a ring to rage – the living room will do just fine. An undisputed masterpiece.

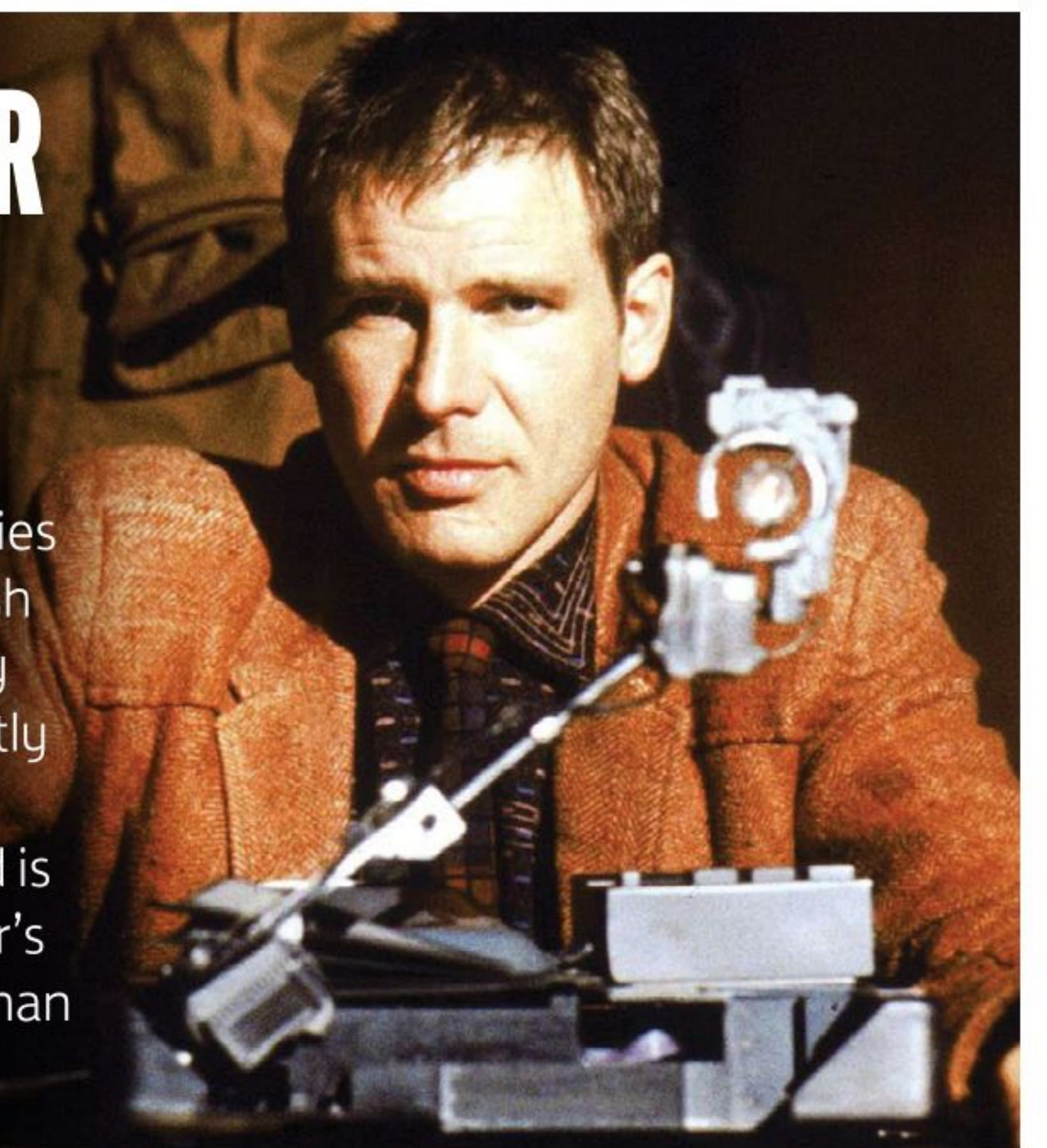
9 E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL 1982

Suburbia at its most humdrum and magical. Today, E.T. would be made of pixels, and Spielberg's heart-warming film, like the waddling alien himself, would neither be as intelligent, sensitive nor alive. Meshing the personal with ebullient fantasy and an unfussy plot (boy befriends a stranded alien), it's innocent rather than naïve; sweet rather than sentimental.



8 BLADE RUNNER 1982

Visually bleak and yet simultaneously stunning, Ridley Scott's film felt real in 1982 and it feels real now. But its real power lies in its slow-burn tension of a noirish plot that refuses to settle for easy answers, and the batch of perfectly judged performances. Harrison Ford's wearily downbeat Deckard is the ideal balance to Rutger Hauer's operatic Roy Batty, the most human of inhuman killers imaginable.



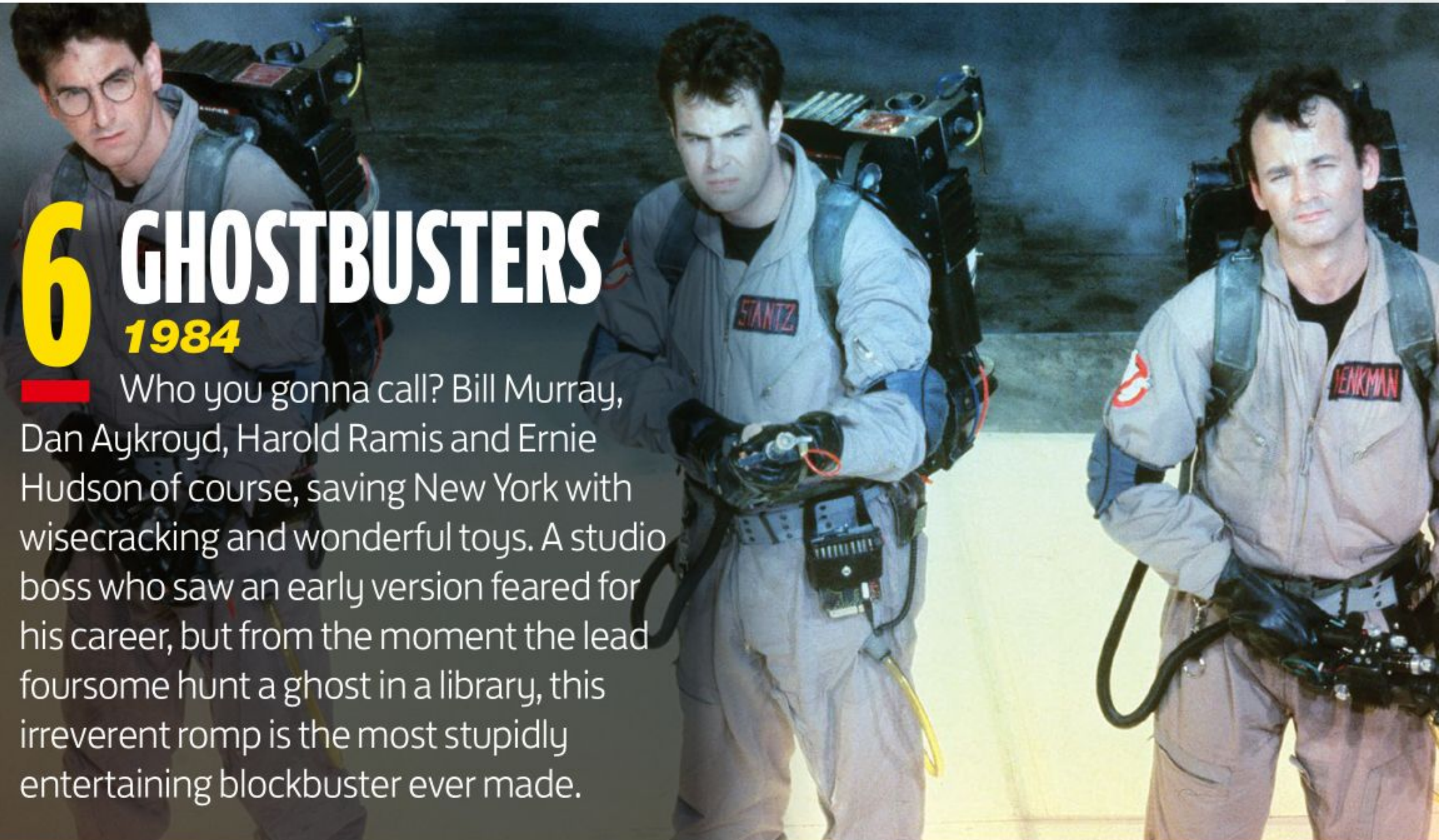
7 RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 1981

One year after the Empire struck back, Han Solo grabbed his hat and battled the Nazis for the Ark of the Covenant in this runaway boulder of a film. Though a celebration of B-movie adventures, it employs a modern, knowing sensibility that doesn't undermine the action but only cranks it up even further.



6 GHOSTBUSTERS 1984

Who you gonna call? Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson of course, saving New York with wisecracking and wonderful toys. A studio boss who saw an early version feared for his career, but from the moment the lead foursome hunt a ghost in a library, this irreverent romp is the most stupidly entertaining blockbuster ever made.



COUNTDOWN

5 THE TERMINATOR 1984

James Cameron had less than \$7m. Arnie had fewer than 100 words. It's all they needed to build this relentless sci-fi thriller with a human heart. Lifting from *Alien*, slasher flicks, conspiracy thrillers and film noir, Cameron used his money wisely to fashion a lean and metal-mean sci-fi that emerged as a brash, bolshie beast in its own right.



4 FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF 1986

"Bueller... Bueller..." The kid you wish you were, having the day you wish you had. Matthew Broderick is a teen superhero for anyone who came of age in the '80s. John Hughes wrote the script in a weekend, and the result was a happily-ever-after sugar high for everyone involved, making this *the* feel-good comedy of the 1980s.

3 ALIENS 1986

"Get away from her, you bitch!" A sequel to Ridley Scott's space shocker *Alien* had been planned as far back as 1979, but it wasn't until James Cameron came on board that it finally came to fruition. Splicing gung-ho action with war movie clichés, the exhilarating, explosive and action-packed result turned Sigourney Weaver into a bona-fide action star in what would become her most iconic role. The Oscar nomination that followed was not only well-deserved, it also marked the first time a performer in a sci-fi movie had been so recognised. One of the greatest actioners ever.



2 THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK 1980

Faced with following up the super-successful first *Star Wars*, George Lucas turned to his former teacher, Irvin Kershner, to direct, who said he'd only take the job if he could expand on the original, making it more grown up and much darker. "I wanted humour, I wanted emotion, I wanted people to be interesting," said Kershner. "I wanted everyone to reveal their emotional side – robots included." Boy, did he deliver. Where *Star Wars* was all about last minute escapes and the little guys bloodying the nose of the evil Empire at the very last minute, here, characters end the movie with missing limbs, encased in carbonite, or mourning for lost loves. *Star Wars* was a great popcorn movie, but it never shocks you in the way *Empire* does. Case in point: the legendary, "No, I am your father" moment. Lucas and Kershner went to great lengths to keep it a secret, and a few people knew the line that James Earl Jones later dubbed over the fake scripted line.





1 BACK TO THE FUTURE 1985

Why don't they make 'em like this anymore? Because they never did. Hard-wiring sci-fi, comedy, teen movie and Freudian nightmare, director Robert Zemeckis' fantastic voyage is a genuine one-off. That plot for starters, couldn't be cleverer or weirder: bonkers scientist Christopher Lloyd sending Michael J. Fox back to the '50s in a pimped-out DeLorean to inspire his father (Crispin Glover) and avoid shagging his mother. Once the fun is in motion, events tick towards each inspired pay-off with the precision magic of a Swiss watch: Glover's left hook, Fox strumming back to life, that unbearably tense finale. Part *Doctor Who*, part *Happy Days*, Zemeckis' film clashes so many genres it's hard to keep up, but it fully exploits its plutonium-rich premise and champion cast. Fox has never been better as the time-travelling, rock-n-roll-inventing, matchmaking '80s teen, and *Back To The Future* is a film to constantly go back to. **80%**



SCI-FI & FANTASY

IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

Thanks to tech advances, wild imaginations and an eagerness to try something new, the 1980s enjoyed a sci-fi and fantasy boom. Welcome to a world of wonders...

WORDS JOSH WINNING

If fantasy and sci-fi belonged to anybody in the 1980s, it was George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Between them, they were responsible for mainstream smashes like *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones* and *E.T.* and, thanks to them, the decade was never short on fantastic new worlds, awesome action spectacle and memorably kooky characters.

"I think one of the reasons Steven and I have been as successful as we have is because we like the movies," Lucas said recently. "We like to go to the movies. We want to be able to entertain the audience. We want to be able to startle the audience. We want to be able to blow the audience away."

There's no denying the duo frequently did just that. Though *Star Wars* was Lucas' masterwork – both *Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return Of The Jedi* (1983) did huge business – the self-confessed fairytale fanatic worked even harder behind the scenes as the producer of some of the most memorable genre films of the 1980s. And even if the likes of *Willow* (1988) and *Labyrinth* (1986) ended up box office disappointments, that doesn't dim their dazzle any.

Labyrinth in particular has become a cult treasure. Directed by Jim Henson – whose *Dark Crystal* (1982) delivered even darker daydreams – and produced by Lucas, it featured a colourful array of puppets as Jennifer Connelly's teen attempts to make it through the Goblin King's (David Bowie) realm to save her baby brother. Its box office returns were disastrous (it made just \$12m on its \$25m budget), but love for *Labyrinth* has only grown over the years.

Connelly looks back fondly. "This was one of the last films where all of that stuff was really there," she says. "It wasn't done digitally. The sets were all there, all the puppets were there, and it was so creative. David Bowie was so generous and lovely with me, and I remember thinking that dress was very, very fancy."

Meanwhile, Steven Spielberg injected fantasy and sci-fi into the mainstream with a string of

critically and financially transcendent greats. His '80s CV reads like a 'greatest hits' for the genre. Just a year before he introduced audiences to *E.T.* and the Freeling family (in supernatural fantasy *Poltergeist*, which he exec produced), he brought Indiana Jones to the screen in *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* (1981). With its lovable hero, knowing humour and whip-cracking action sequences, it made \$389m at the box office, was nominated for nine Academy Awards and birthed a franchise.

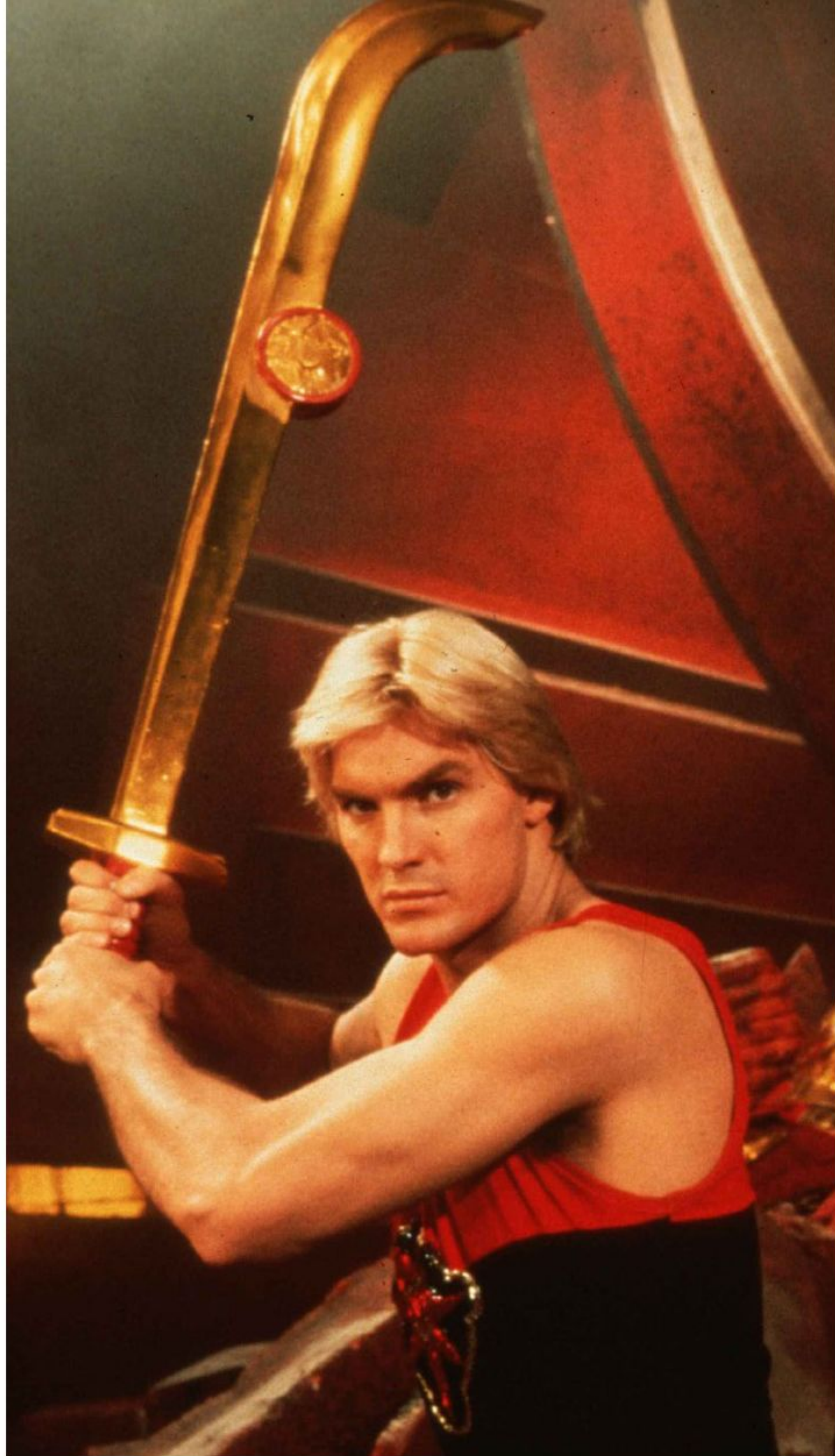
"It puts people in the same place that made me want to make movies as a child," Spielberg said, "which is wanting to enthrall, entertain, take people out of their seats to get them involved." Whether he

was directing, or producing fare like *Back To The Future* (1985), *The Goonies* (1985) and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), Spielberg's wizard-like powers meant everything he touched turned to gold. His contributions to the genres only boosted their popularity, and in his wake, the race to find the next big thing was on.

That race produced a mixed bag of offerings. In 1984, kid-friendly releases like

New worlds:
(clockwise from left) Peter MacNicol in *Dragonslayer*, getting ready to fight in *Flash Gordon*, John Carpenter's *Escape From New York*, Jennifer Connelly and David Bowie in *Labyrinth*





The Neverending Story, *Ghostbusters* and *Gremlins* ruled end-of-year lists, but that didn't mean every genre flick was destined for a box office blow-out. Disney's fantastic *Dragonslayer* (1981) made just \$14m despite strong reviews, while the considerably less-good *Beastmaster* (1982) and *Krull* (1983) spectacularly flopped ("a blatantly derivative hodgepodge of *Excalibur* meets *Star Wars*" opined *Variety* of the latter).

It didn't stop filmmakers trying, though, and the decade's rampant creativity led to increasingly bizarre genre mutations. Camp – both intentional and unintentional – prevailed, with scenery-chewing silly-flicks like *Flash Gordon* (1980) and *Xanadu* (also 1980) revelling in their own ridiculousness ("I think the big problem was the script," mused star Olivia Newton-John). And in a brazen show of cross-pollination, *Masters Of The Universe* (1987) funnelled both fantasy and sci-fi into a bonkers mix of *Star Wars* and *He-Man*.

Elsewhere, even Woody Allen (*Purple Rose Of Cairo*) and Francis Ford Coppola (*Peggy Sue Got Married*) had a crack at genre stuffs, while horror maestro John Carpenter produced some of the decade's finest fare in *Escape From New York* (1981), *The Thing* (1982), *Christine* (1983), *Starman* (1984), *Big Trouble In Little China* (1986) and *They Live* (1988). Most were considered box office failures but have stood the test of time.

Also in 1984, the real titan of grown-up sci-fi appeared on the scene. James Cameron, fresh from working on the set designs for *Escape From New York* (and directing the disastrous *Piranha II: The Spawning*), established himself as a champion of sci-fi with brains. With the triple whammy of *The Terminator* (1984), *Aliens* (1986) and *The Abyss* (1989), he gifted Arnold Schwarzenegger the best role of his career, Sigourney Weaver an Oscar nod, and special effects a giant leap forward.

"Science-fiction is the Rodney Dangerfield of movie genres," Cameron told *The LA Times* in 1991. "As a filmmaker, it's a question of what you want out of life: Do you want to create the greatest impact on the greatest number of people? Or do you want a claim as an intellectual, auteur filmmaker. I don't think you can have it both ways."

If Cameron represented the more grown-up side of sci-fi, he never went quite as dark as some of his contemporaries. Like Carpenter, David

Cronenberg stumbled into sci-fi via horror, his *Videodrome* (1983) serving up seriously bizarre imagery alongside its social commentary. Similarly bleak was Ridley Scott's masterful *Blade Runner* (1982), while Terry Gilliam flirted with battiness in *Brazil* (1985) via the more kiddie-friendly exploits of *Time Bandits* (1981). And things got properly weird in Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980).

By the time 1989 arrived, though, *Ghostbusters II* and *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* were wrapping up the decade's big franchises, while Disney's *The Little Mermaid* renewed interest in animated retellings of classic fairytales. And when Tim Burton took on *Batman*, he prophesied where sci-fi and fantasy stories would be told a decade later, when comic-book adaptations became all the rage. "It's like a folk tale or fairytale," Burton said of the Batman legacy. "You can kind of revisit things and show things in a different way." Which, after all, is what fantasy is all about. 🦇

'Labyrinth was one of the last films where all that stuff was really there. It wasn't done digitally. You had all the puppets and it was so creative' **Jennifer Connelly**



“THEY TOLD US TIME TRAVEL WAS POISON AT THE BOX OFFICE...”

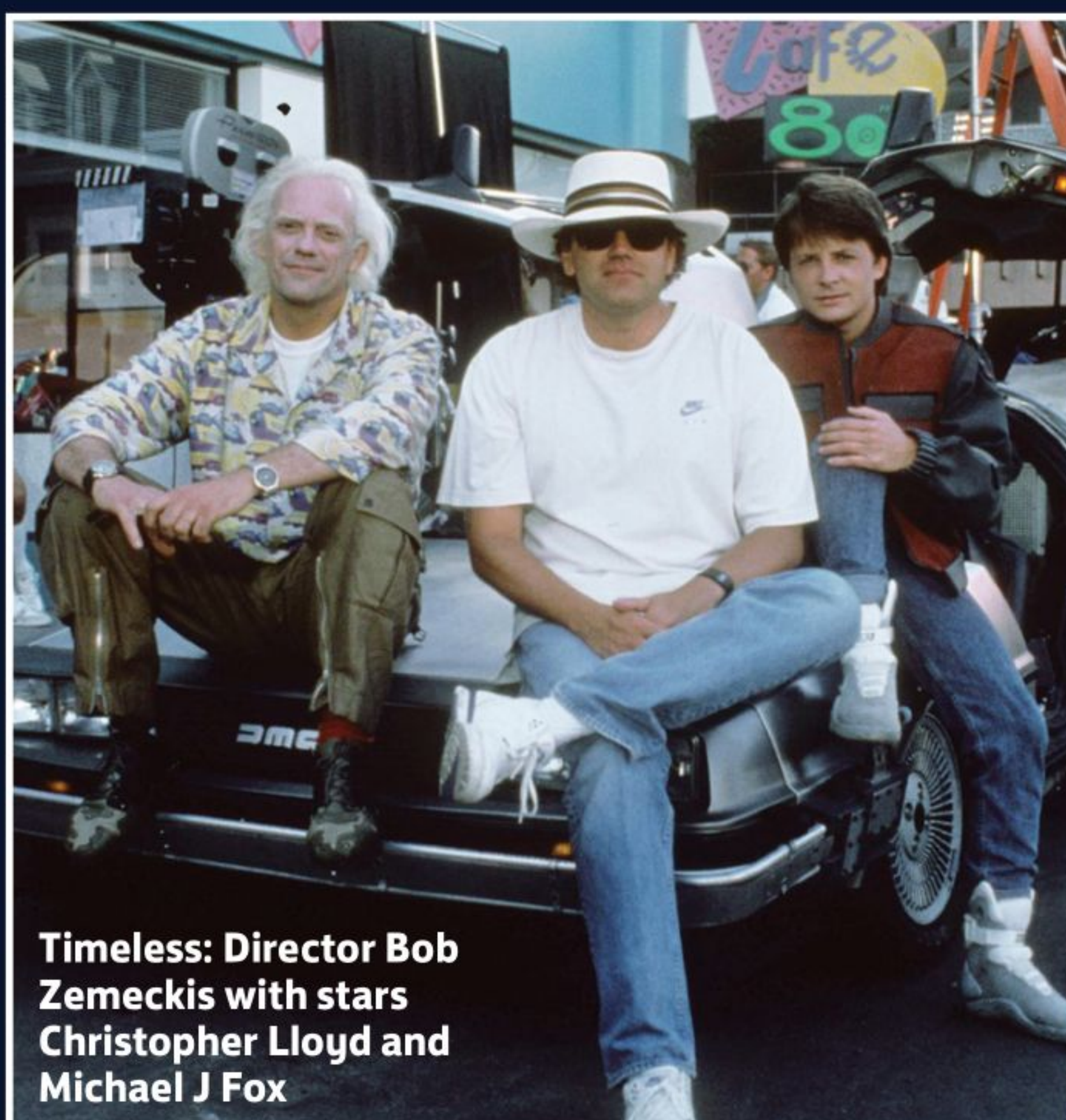
OVER THIRTY YEARS OF
BACK TO THE FUTURE

The folks behind the '80s sci-fi franchise tell us why it still rocks!

WORDS **GEORGE KHOURY**

An astonishing three decades ago, Steven Spielberg launched the first *Back To The Future* film upon the world... and popular culture would never be the same again. Created by Bob Gale and Robert Zemeckis, the time-bending trilogy was not only a nearly-billion dollar franchise but a cherished series of films that earned their place in screen history.

Marty McFly's adventures are as popular as ever, and the sequel's 2015 setting suddenly finds us living in the future. Riding the DeLorean with us for a look at the making of the movies are Bob Gale (screenwriter/producer), Christopher Lloyd (the legendary Doc Brown), Lea Thompson (Marty's mum), Kevin Pike (special effects supervisor on *Part One*), Andrew Probert (production illustrator on *Part One*) and poster artist Drew Struzan. Strap yourselves in and fire up the flux capacitor... >>



Timeless: Director Bob Zemeckis with stars Christopher Lloyd and Michael J. Fox

BACK TO THE FUTURE



**FROM THE
ARCHIVES**
ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED
IN 2010



BACKSTORY

BOB GALE: "Bob [Zemeckis] and I wrote the script for Columbia. We made the deal in 1980, and we wrote two drafts, both of which were delivered in 1981. Bob was attached as director, and I was attached as producer. No-one else was attached. My recollection is that Steven [Spielberg] always liked the script, from whatever draft it was he read first, back in 1981. We gave it to him to get feedback, and he wanted to be involved. But we had done three movies with Steven – *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978), *1941* (1979) and *Used Cars* (1980) – which had all done sub-par at the box office. We were concerned that if Steven was attached and *Back To The Future* bombed, we'd be looked upon as those guys that only got jobs because of their pal Steven Spielberg. Steven totally understood our reasoning – all of us in Hollywood tend to be a bit superstitious – but left the door open if we changed our mind. Columbia passed on the script, and we took it all over town to various studios and big-name producers, but no-one was interested. We got over 40 rejections. Bob decided to take the next worthwhile directing job that came along, which was *Romancing The Stone*. When it became a big hit, everyone wanted to make his next movie. The movie he wanted to make was *BTTF*, and we decided to go back to the one man who had always believed in it: Steven. Steven had just set up Amblin Entertainment at Universal, and we were the first Amblin production. We went into pre-production in summer 1984, and started shooting in November."

CASTING

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD: "I tossed it. I tossed the *Back To The Future* script. But one of my mottos for the business was never to leave any stone unturned... You never know. So I took that advice and said, 'Okay, I'll go back to LA and meet Bob Zemeckis,' at the least give it a look-see. And I'm certainly so grateful that things turned out that way, because doing the trilogy, doing those three movies, was perhaps the highlight of my life."

GALE: "Michael [Fox] never auditioned – he didn't need to, because we could watch him on *Family Ties* every week. Michael is a terrific reactive comedian, which is exactly what the part needed – not just the ability to deliver a line, but the ability to react to a line, to another actor, or to a situation and make it funny and human."

LEA THOMPSON: "I did a lot of research on young Lorraine. I read tons of magazines from the period, listened to all the popular music from 1950 to '54 constantly. As a matter of fact, every time I would get ready to shoot a scene as young Lorraine, I would sing 'Mr Sandman' to myself. It was annoying. I based the 'old Lorraine' on a girlfriend's mother I grew up with. She was not a happy woman. Playing all those aspects of Lorraine was a great deal of fun and a wonderful opportunity to show off."



Mum's the word:
Marty attracts some
unwanted amour

THE DELOREAN TIME MACHINE

ANDREW PROBERT: "Before [Ron] Cobb came aboard I'd sketched up several variations of the car for my own interest. The producers all saw them as a few were tacked up on the wall."

KEVIN PIKE: "We started early in October, put a shop together, and put in the crew. It took us approximately 10 weeks to build the three DeLorean time machines for *Back To The Future*."

PROBERT: "Cobb had laid some pretty nice groundwork, fully using his amazing talent for coming up with hardware that looked and felt as if some nutty professor could do the job himself. I came in when Cobb left and upgraded his initial concept."

PIKE: "Well, it certainly went 88 mph, which was really all it had to do. It certainly wasn't a high-performance car, nor meant to be a high-performance car, but, for all intents and purposes, the car did everything that it had to do. It sure worked well. Any car that you have that's a 'picture car' you're going to put through challenges every day. We burned it up, and froze it up, and beat it up, and put all these electronics in it. Any car like that's going to need attention. We had our crew, and the wonderful teamster crew had their mechanics to keep it up and running all the time. The stunt people liked to try to beat it up, and we tried to make it right for them. All things considered, I have nothing but the greatest love for the DeLorean as a car, and, of course, I'm really proud of the work that we did on the DeLorean time machine for the movie."



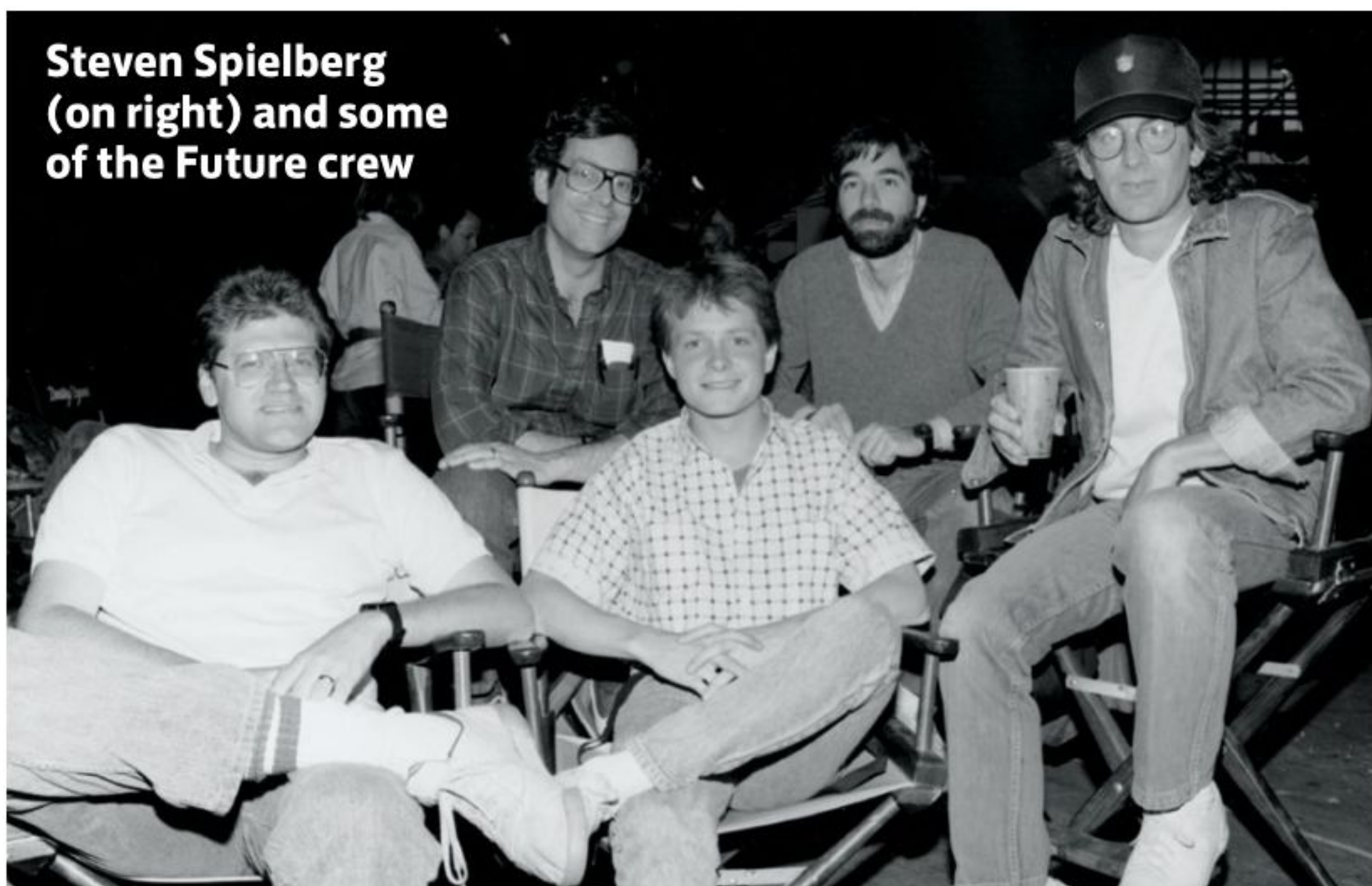
Wheels of fire:
the DeLorean
makes its first
journey



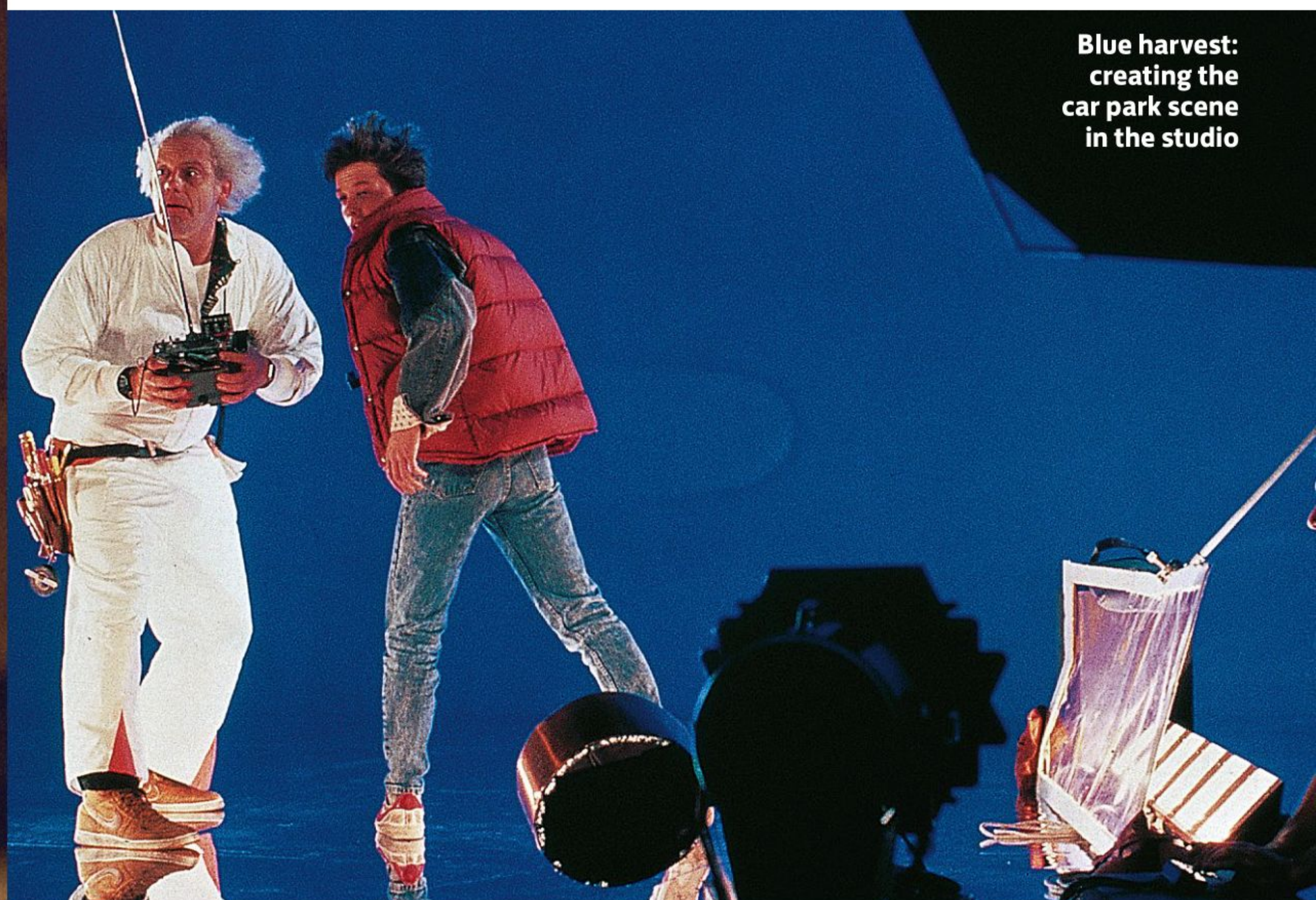
THE BROWN/MCFLY CONNECTION

GALE: "Because Doc is an adult with the exuberance of a boy, and also has the reputation of being 'dangerous', so those are two qualities that would attract someone like Marty to him. Marty would be fascinated by such a character, particularly given his home life."

Steven Spielberg
(on right) and some
of the Future crew



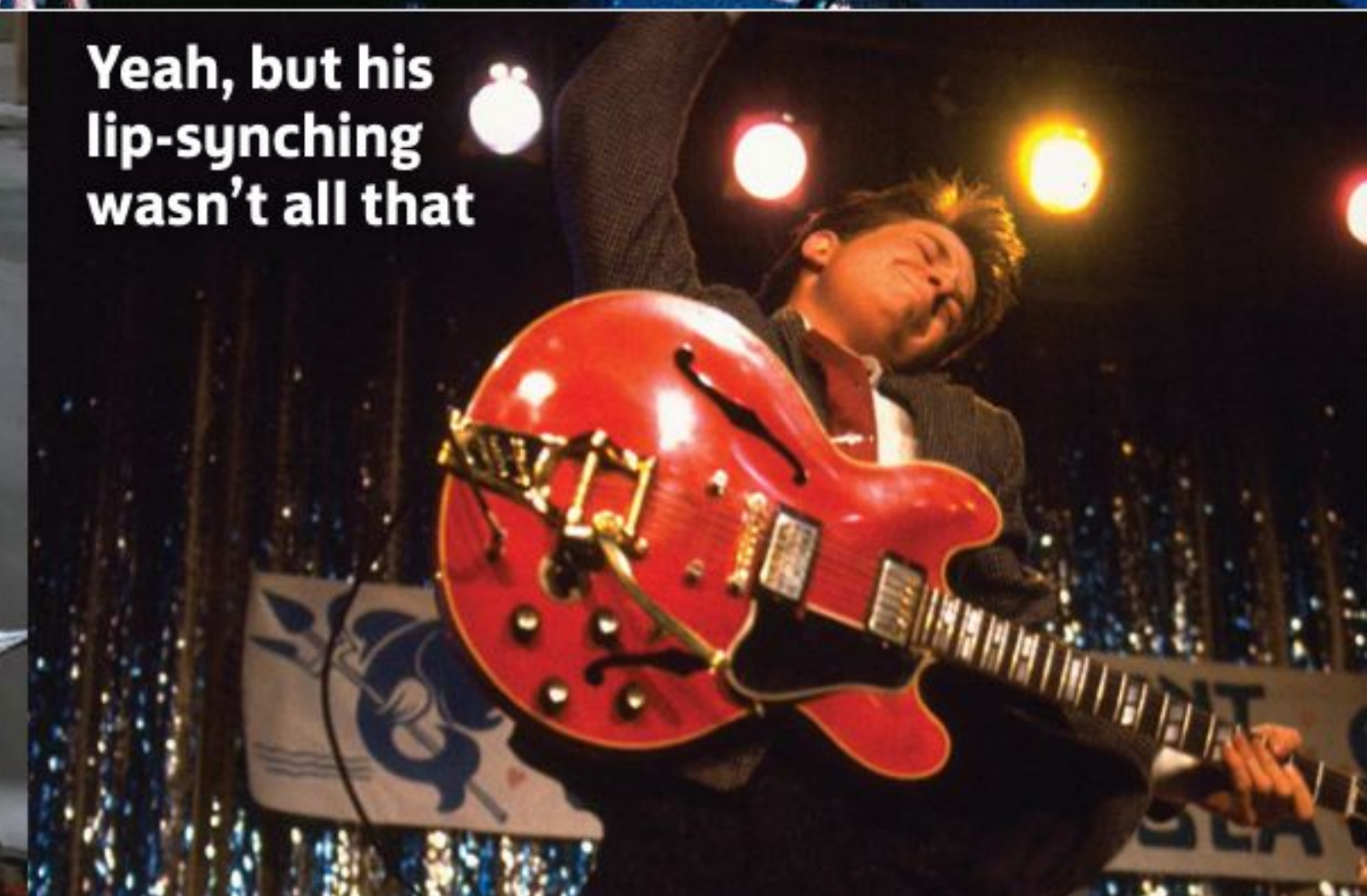
BACK TO THE FUTURE



Blue harvest:
creating the
car park scene
in the studio



Manure not far
away. And Biff
hates manure



Yeah, but his
lip-synching
wasn't all that

Marty would be one to accept Doc on his own terms, and Doc appreciates that. There's a father-son relationship there, which fulfill a need in both of them. As to the specifics of any particular event, that's something we'll let everyone decide themselves!"

LLOYD: "There's been a couple of people when I was younger who I was really enthralled by, because they did what they did with such excitement. Obviously, before the first film begins, Marty and Doc had spent time together, and Doc came up with this new sound system that blows Marty away at the beginning, and he's got all these clocks that go off at the same time. He's got the gadget that automatically opens a can and puts the dog food in the thing. He's continually coming up with new things, and I think Marty looks at all this and there's nobody like it. He's a phenomenon, and I think that is so intriguing to Marty. One of the things that makes the film work is that that's such a deep, profound part of the relationship between Doc and Marty."

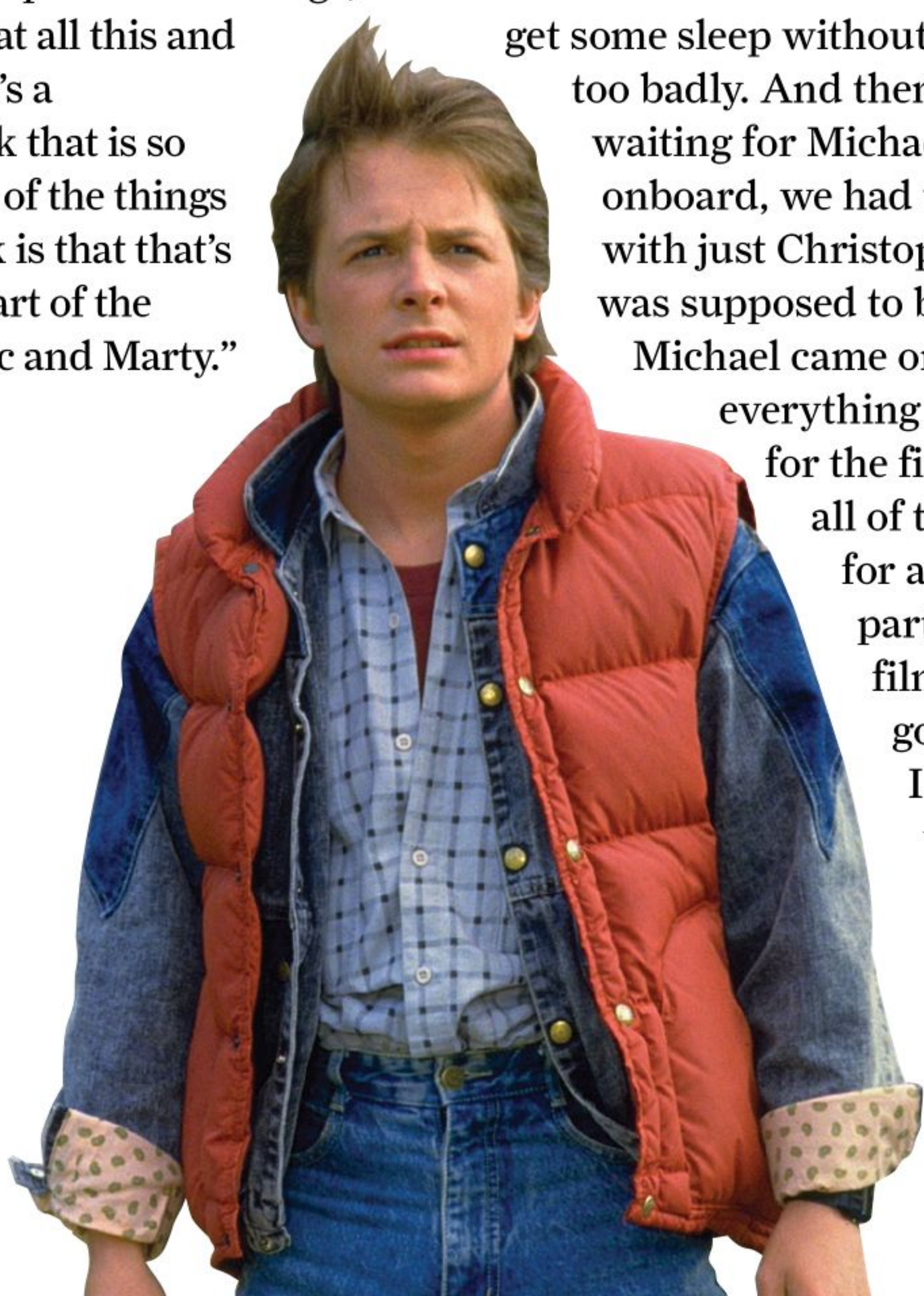
BOX OFFICE POISON

GALE: "We were just trying to tell a good story. We certainly weren't thinking of it in terms of marketing, especially given that

all the marketing 'experts' said that time travel was poison at the box office. We just wanted to make a movie that we would want to see."

CHALLENGES

PIKE: "There was a bit of difficulty in the time frame because we shot so much at night. One of the locations was 60 miles outside of Los Angeles, and to get there was during the rush hour traffic going home, which was our going to work. And when we came back in to go home, they were coming back in to go to work. So it was pretty miserable as far as the time constraints. Not only that, I had a full shop working all day long, and it made it hard to coordinate with them when I was trying to get some sleep without burning the candle too badly. And then, when we were waiting for Michael J Fox to come onboard, we had to do a lot of work with just Christopher, looking at what was supposed to be Michael. When Michael came on, we had to reshoot everything that we had done for the first six weeks... So all of those elements made for a challenge, just as part of the rigours of filmmaking. But we got through it, and I think it turned out well in the end, to say the least." [Fox was busy filming Family Ties during daylight hours.] >>



BACK TO THE POSTER!

Legendary artist Drew Struzan on that classic image

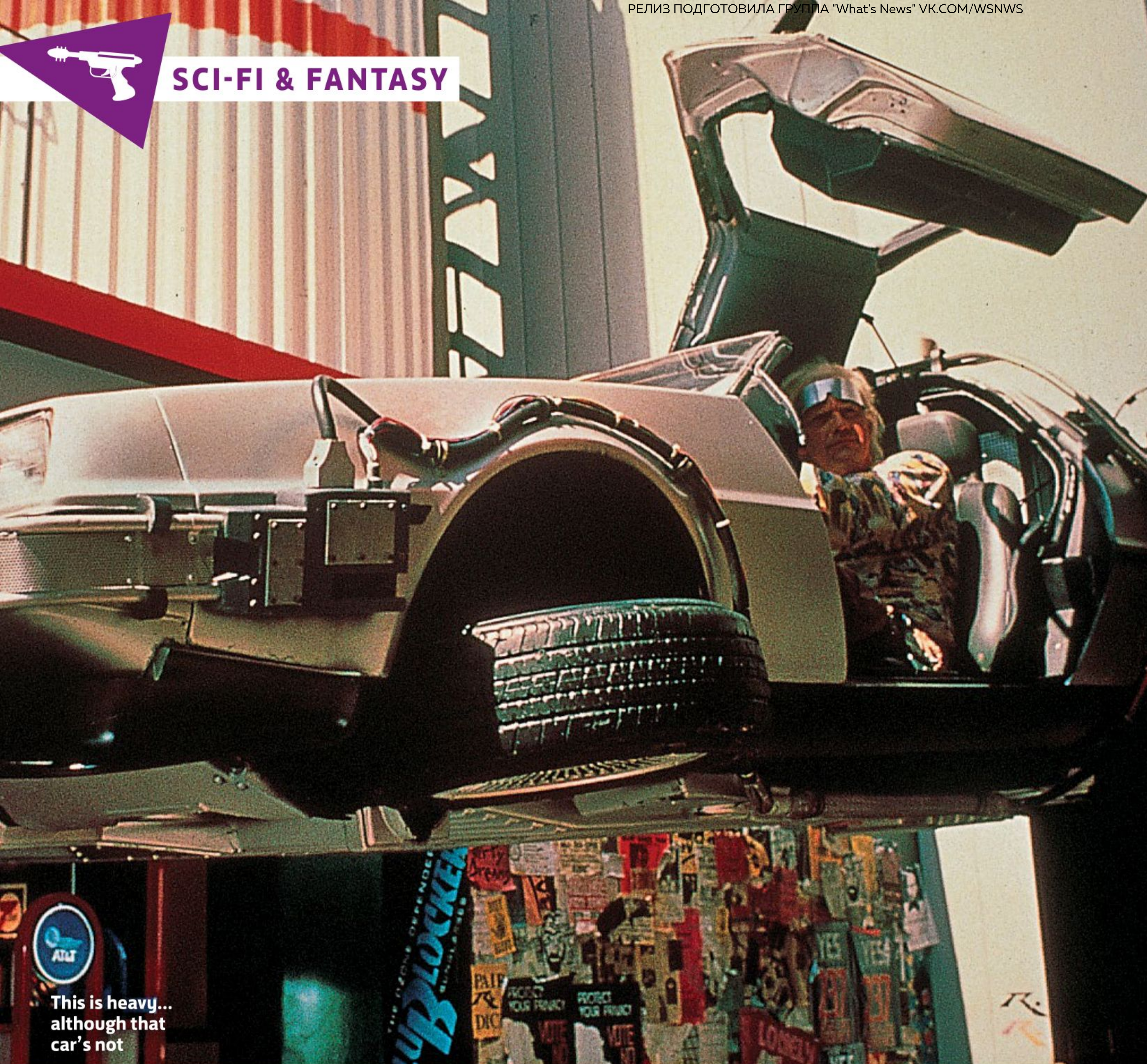
"It was a peculiar circumstance, because we worked for weeks on ideas. I did the black-and-white, and then they had me do colour ones, and then they had me make changes to those, develop it further. So they were going in a pretty straight line toward what they wanted, and we were close to actually starting a painting based on what I was doing. And then, from somewhere else, they got this idea of him standing by the car. And there was some other artist – I wasn't the only guy working on it – and they said, 'We like the concept,' but they wanted my technique. So they said, 'Okay, take this concept and paint it in your technique.' So I went straight from the other guy's concept, and we designed it and composed it the way I felt about it, and just painted it."

"I obviously had some photos of the actor, and his likeness, and the costume he was wearing, and stuff like that. And there was an art director involved, and he had a photo

session with Michael that didn't work out well, so I didn't use that. So I actually took some pictures, I modelled for the body shot, and stuck the actor's head on it. I do whatever I can to make it as good as I possibly can. If there's materials, I use those. If they don't exist, I make my own."

"Here we are, 25 years later, and people are still talking about *Back To The Future*, and they're talking about the artwork. It makes me feel good to realise that I did something more than just advertising. I did something that lives like art, where people just keep enjoying it."





This is heavy...
although that
car's not



Doc corrects his
error of bringing
Jennifer into the
future...



McFly! McFly!

PART TWO

GALE: "Of course it was a different experience working solo! As far as the first draft of *Part Two* went, Bob Zemeckis and I had just roughed out the basic structure and some of the key plot points. In that version, the last section took place in 1967. I ran with that, and after Bob read it, he got the idea of doing the last section in 1955 again. So there was still a lot of collaboration, but it was of a slightly different sort. There's always pressure to get a script done quickly, but quality comes first, and a sequel was not going to go into production until both Bob and I were satisfied with the script."

LLOYD: "In the first *Back To The Future*, I send Marty off, and the lightning strikes, and the stunt man slides down the wire, and then Marty takes off. I have this very emotional, euphoric glee, and it worked. And I sent him back wherever he was going, and that sequence had to be repeated in *Back To The Future 2*, which was about two years later. And I was very, very concerned about matching it. I think I was more worried about that than any other scene in the film. That was rough getting that. But it worked out."

THOMPSON: "When we recreated the dance scene in *BTF 2* it was difficult for me because they had replaced Crispin Glover with a lookalike. That was a huge drag. But that aside, it was wild to be there four years later in the same dress in the same place."

HOVERBOARDS NOT FOR SALE

GALE: [During the promotion for *Part Two*, Zemeckis pretended that Hoverboards were real.] "It was a joke! No-one ever expected anyone would take it seriously! And we certainly didn't make any friends at Mattel – for years, kids would call up demanding they put them on the market!"



compete with all the technical effects, but I never really regarded it as a hindrance. It was just the reality of what we were doing."

GALE: "With *Part Three*, we wanted to return to the essence of *Part One*, where there was just one trip back and one trip forward."

PART THREE

GALE: "The studio were only resistant until they understood it was better to make two films costing \$40 million each than make one film that cost \$60 million, and then, sometime later, to do a *Part Three* that would cost another \$40-\$60 million. It was the cost savings of doing the sequels back-to-back that convinced them to pull the trigger."

LLOYD: "I remember in *Back To The Future 3*, I'm in a barn, and I've put together this enormous machine that creates ice, and it's like the machine was moving, and gears are going around, and there's steam coming out of it. Then this little cube of ice emerges from the spout. And there was so much technical stuff going on in the scene, and repeated takes, repeated takes. So finally everything came together and worked perfectly, and I somehow flubbed my line in that one take. So it was a challenge, but it was also very exciting. The energy level had to come up in order to

CHARACTER REVERSAL

GALE: "It just seemed like the right thing to do. Because Marty had experienced the most trauma in the first two films from alterations in the space-time continuum, it made sense that he would now be the one to speak out loudly against it. Meanwhile, Doc has fallen in love, and we all know that being in love can cause a person to act irresponsibly."

WESTERN STYLE

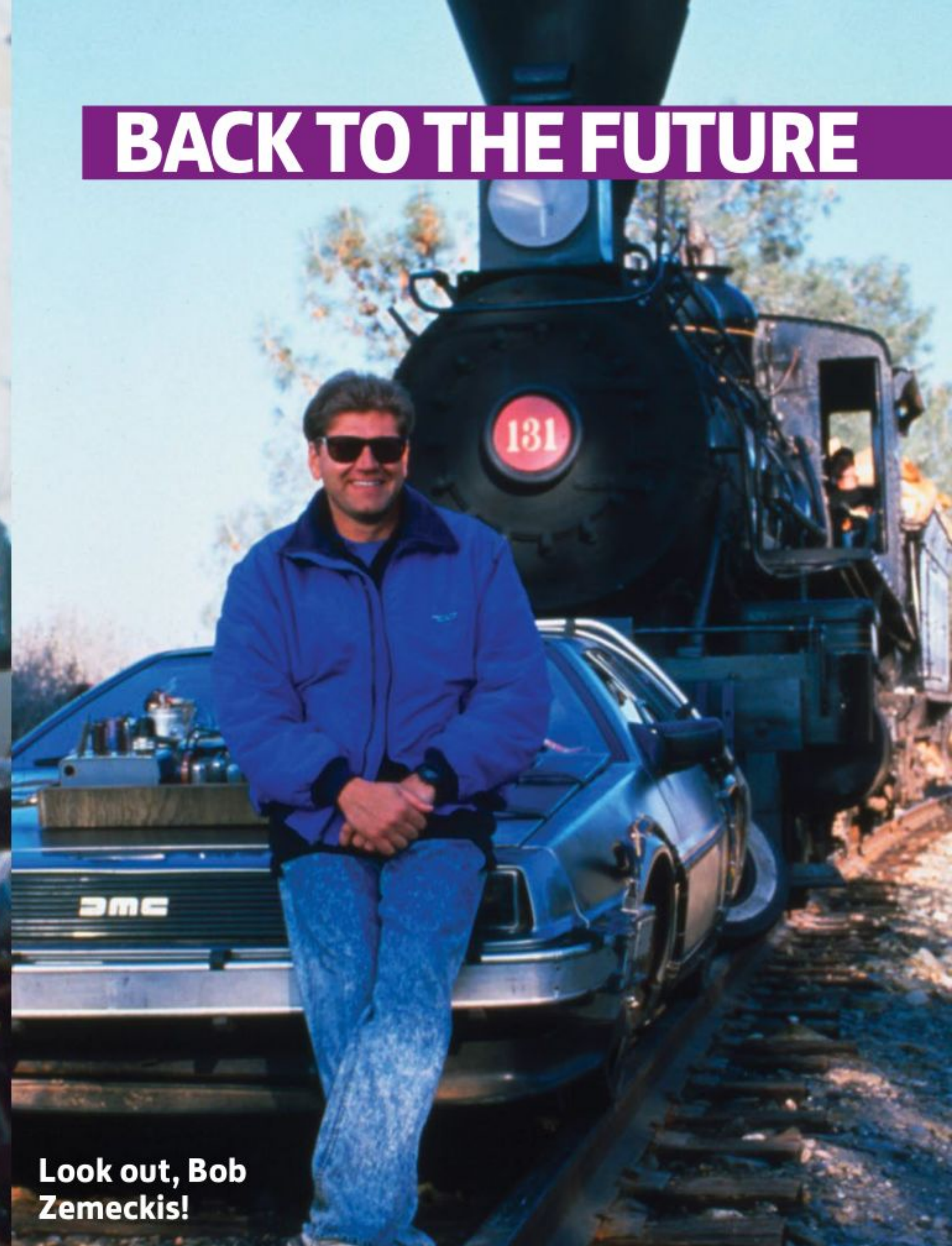
LLOYD: "My favourite is the third. It was in the Old West, and Westerns are always fun. There's horseback riding and all that fun stuff of the West. And doing all those scenes with that steam engine, where you're holding on. And there's a certain risk involved... that train is moving along at a pretty good pace! That was very exciting to do. And, also, Doc has a romance. So all of it put together, it was pretty exciting."



So that's how
they did it!



"Clint Eastwood"
about to take a
backwards tumble



Look out, Bob
Zemeckis!



Buford "Mad Dog"
Tannen: one very
unshaved man

GALE: "Bob Zemeckis came up with that idea. We both grew up on Westerns, and we thought of it as a romantic era in American history. It's the archetype of American mythology, and it made sense to show the birth of Hill Valley – or at least the Courthouse and clock. Plus, there is nothing more visual than a locomotive!"

THOMPSON: "Playing the Irish lass, Maggie McFly, was such a joy. I always love the challenge of doing an accent. Especially when I have a fantastic dialect coach. And the idea that Marty would wake up three times to his mother was so funny. I only regret that I didn't get to ride a horse."

THE FUTURE OF THE FRANCHISE

LLOYD: "I don't know, because of his [Fox's] situation, whether it would be possible to do another one. Beyond that, I just feel that Gale and Zemeckis felt that they had completed the story, a whole cycle of going back and forth in time, and the consequences and all that. It had completed itself, and to try to go on further and do another one, even if they had decided to do it back then, might have been pushing the envelope a little bit too far. So I feel it works as it is, and that's that."

The Future 3 events! We've seen franchises that went back to the well one too many times, resulting in a less than satisfying sequel, and Bob and I never wanted to go there. Because we've been so clear about that, the studio has never asked us to consider it – they know we'd say 'no'."

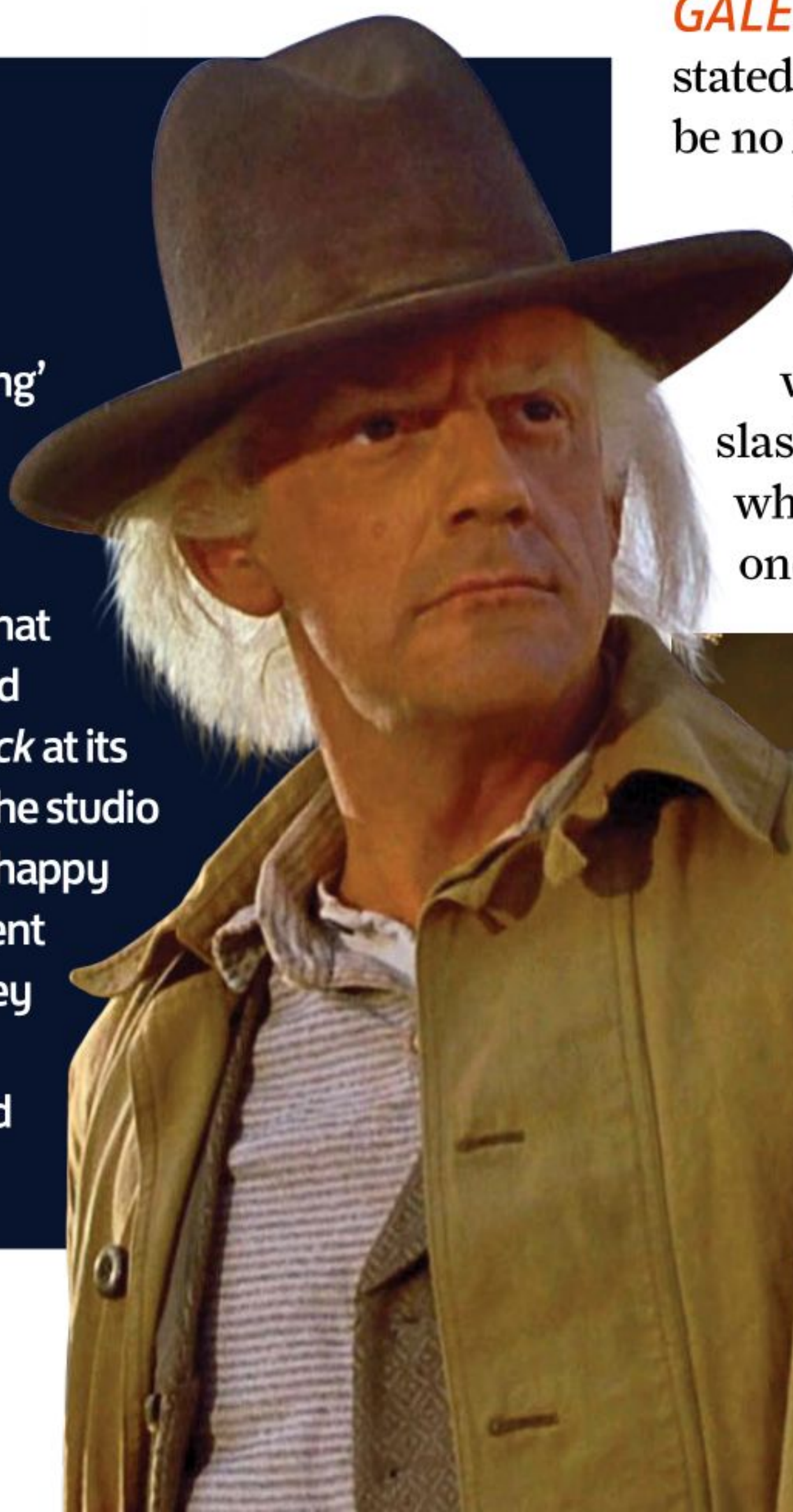
BACK TO FOREVER

LLOYD: "You do a film sometimes, and people remember it – the people who were young at the time they saw it. And that film moves on, and you don't see it any more, and no new generations really appreciate it. But this film just continues to enthrall young audiences. I'm constantly meeting kids on the street, who have just seen the film for the first time, and they're seven, eight years old, and it just doesn't quit. And that's very satisfying, to feel you've been a part of something that has meant so much to so many people, and still continues to do so. That's a great thing."

GALE: "We have always stated that there would be no *Part Four*. We even had T-shirts made up with a *BTTF4* logo with a circle and slash through it, which we wore to one of the *Back To*

SELLING THE SEQUELS

GALE: "I don't know that anything 'went wrong' with *Part Three* in that regard. I think it was a mistake not to have advertised *Part Two* as the second part of a trilogy. I lobbied for that, because I thought the audience should know that the story did not end in *Part Two*. I remembered being annoyed at the end of *Empire Strikes Back* at its non-ending, as I wasn't prepared for that. But the studio didn't agree, and a lot of the audience was not happy to see 'To Be Concluded'. So there was a segment of the audience that was angry, and maybe they gave up on us. We know there was also a segment of the audience that wasn't interested in a Western, no matter what."



Mary Steenburgen had
also been in time travel
movie *Time After Time!*

MICHAEL J. FOX

Just call him Mr Popular. How the pint-sized Canadian actor made a giant-sized leap from small-screen sitcoms to big-screen stardom...

July 1985 and Michael J. Fox is celebrating something of a hat-trick. His TV sitcom *Family Ties* is hovering near the top of the US ratings. His throwaway comedy *Teen Wolf* is the number two film in the country ("Inexplicably," he admits) and the number one movie is, of course, *Back To The Future*. As the actor himself relayed in his self-deprecating autobiography, *Lucky Man*: "I went from modest, anonymous success to joining the Being-Famous-In-America Fun House."

The diminutive Fox became an entertainment giant in the '80s. Both a popular Everyman and a teen pin-up, his easy charm and natural acting style made everything he did seem effortless. Which may explain why no one made a bigger fuss about this 5' 4" Canadian, who wandered from small screen to big and back again without breaking his stride. As Johnny Depp pointed out: "You couldn't really move from TV to film at that time. It was a tough leap. As a television actor myself, I know. The only guy who appeared to have done it easily was Michael."

Fox first established himself on the small screen when he won the role of Alex P. Keaton in the sitcom *Family Ties*. "I think I won out by being more obnoxious than the other kids who auditioned," he claimed, but the producers knew they had found someone special. The initial premise of the show – focusing on two hippy-ish liberal parents trying to deal with the conservative '80s – was quickly shifted towards Fox's character. "We kind of knew we needed to change things around by the second episode," admitted the show's creator, Gary David Goldberg.

The prim, ambitious-yet-still-likeable yuppie Alex became an icon of the Republican times and the viewers' favourite. He propelled the show up the ratings, attracting the attention of Steven Spielberg. Goldberg was approached and asked

to let Fox star in a film about a time-travelling teenager. At first, Goldberg didn't tell the actor about the offer, not wanting to lose him to celluloid. But after it became apparent that Eric Stoltz wasn't working out (Spielberg cast Stoltz as Marty McFly after it looked like Fox would be unavailable), Goldberg was approached again and this time relented.

For the next two months, Fox would work on *Family Ties* from 10am to 6pm then *Back To The Future* until 2.30am. "I had to learn to enjoy it," said Fox. "I averaged about four hours of sleep a night, but I figured if I couldn't handle the pace at my age, then I might as well get out of the business." The excessive hours paid off when *Back To The Future* made Fox an international star,

'You couldn't really move from TV to film at that time. The only guy who did it easily was Michael J. Fox'

along the way earning the studio some \$380m worldwide, a huge figure for the mid-'80s.


A measure of Fox's appeal is that *Teen Wolf*, a low-budget teen B-movie (filmed before *Back To The Future* but released a month afterward), went on to become the second highest-grossing film of the year. Fox hit gold again with *Back To The Future*'s second and third outings, while yuppie comedy *The Secret Of My Success* was another big hit. All played on the actor's undeniable charm and boyish charisma, although some felt he should try exploring a more expansive range of roles. "I don't see any reason why Michael needs to be confined to some cherubic image," offered *Taxi Driver* scribe Paul Schrader. "He's a likeable actor, but he doesn't have to be so clean-scrubbed."

Fox did indeed dip into murkier fare with the harrowing *Casualties Of War*, *Bright Lights, Big City*

and Schrader's own *Light Of Day*, to mixed success. The actor himself admitted he didn't apply much of a filter to the roles he accepted. "I was just saying, 'Yes, I'm free; let's fit it in and do it,'" said Fox. "I wasn't really considering whether the script was any good or if the thing had a chance to be successful. I guess I wanted to use the time to make as many movies as I could before they pulled the plug on me, because I felt it would happen at some point. Let's face it, this town is a lottery system for actors. One year you're it and the next, you're gone. So I thought, 'Let's do some weird films before it all ends. Maybe they'll think I'm complicated and interesting because of it.' So, I'd sign the contracts and be there and then I'd have to do something that wasn't ready or right sometimes."

Although not a big hit, the shooting of *Bright Lights, Big City* did give Fox a chance to reunite on screen with Tracy Pollan, an actress who had played his girlfriend, Ellen Reed, in *Family Ties*; the two got married 14 months later.

Eventually, the big screen offers did taper down, although there were still some gems to come, including the marvellous *The Hard Way* with James Woods, the hit *Doc Hollywood*, Peter Jackson's *The Frighteners* and precursor to *The West Wing*, *The American President*. But it was a return to the small screen with *Spin City* which re-established him as one of America's favourite actors – a status borne out again by his later cameos on shows like *Scrubs* and *Boston Legal*.

His ongoing battle with Parkinson's disease and his tireless campaigning to find a cure have also cemented his popularity with the public. And, despite his illness, Fox remains as upbeat as Marty McFly: "The biggest thing is that I can be in this situation and still love life as much as I do. Because life is great. Sometimes, you just have to put up with a little more crap..." 

Quote me

Michael J. Fox expresses himself...

ON HIS HEIGHT

"Whenever a newspaper or magazine was annoyed with me, I began to shrink. Stories would begin, 'The short actor,' or 'The tiny actor', or even, 'The teeny-weeny actor.'"

ON MEETING

PRINCESS DI "I sat next to Princess Diana during the royal premiere of *Back To The Future*. I was desperate to go to the toilet but I didn't think etiquette allowed me to get up once she had sat down. So it turned into two of the most excruciating hours of my life."

ON BEING A COVER STAR "Everywhere I looked, I saw my image reflected back at me. But they weren't reflections so much as different facets of my public persona; the boy next door on the cover of *People*, the yuppie on the front of *GQ*, a sex symbol on *Playgirl*.

Some aspects I recognised, others might as well have been aliens inhabiting my body – in fact, that may have been a tabloid headline about me, too."

ON TEEN WOLF

"I don't know what I was thinking. At the time, I begged my friends for reassurance that the role wasn't a career killer. With kind hearts and straight faces, they lied, 'Don't worry about it. It'll be great...'"





SCI-FI & FANTASY

E.T. VS THE THING

In 1982, two aliens landed in cinemas. One warmed hearts, the other got frozen out. Here's the strange, inseparable back-story of *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* and *The Thing*...

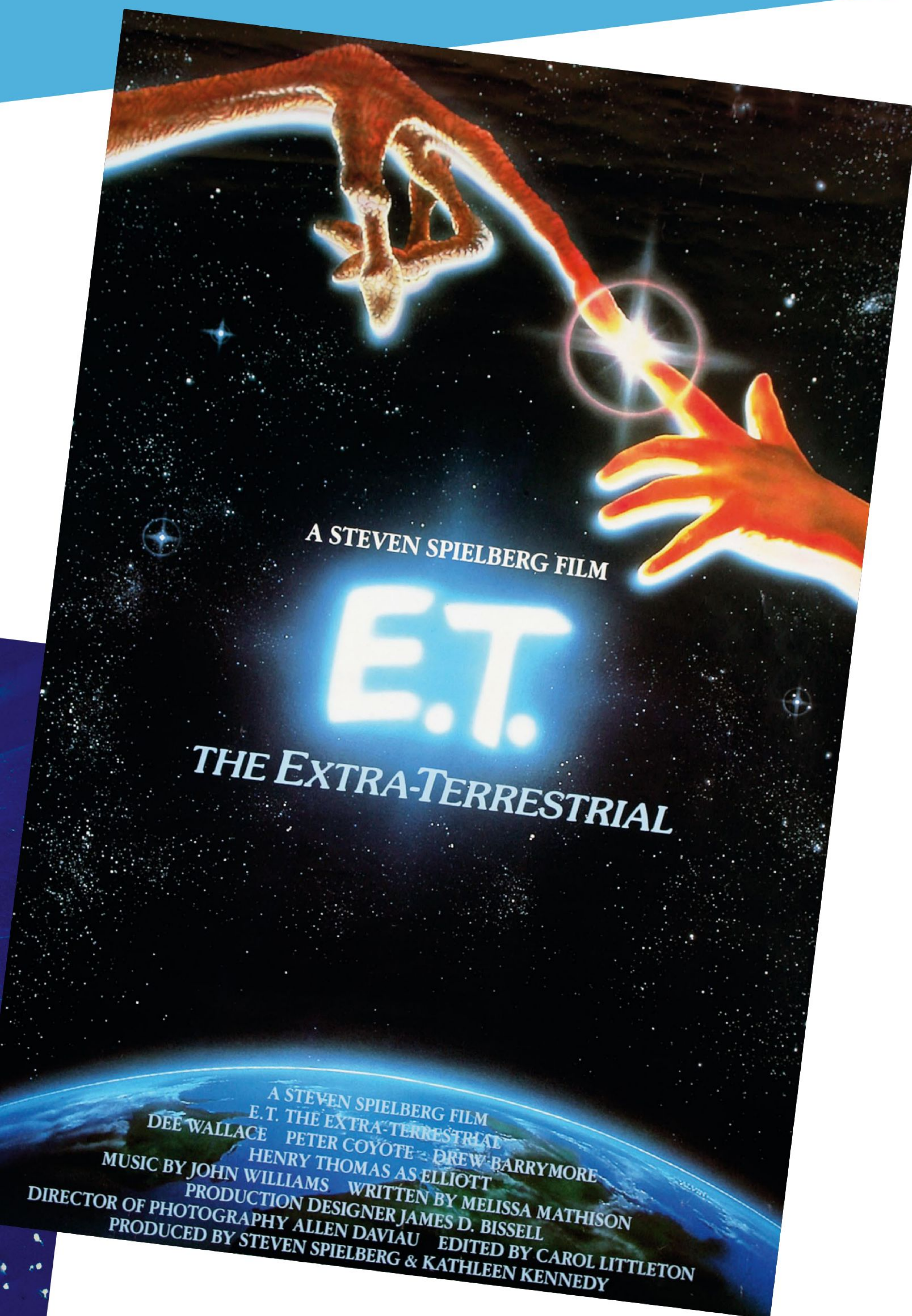
WORDS **JAMIE RUSSELL**

Forget Roswell, the Hudson Valley or even Area 51. In 1982 the best place to catch sight of a UFO was Hollywood, California. Hungry to cash in on the post-*Star Wars* taste for high-tech sci-fi, Universal Pictures was offering audiences the choice of two close encounters with alien kind.

The first was Steven Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, the story of a boy and his alien, billed as "the best Disney movie Walt Disney never made". The second, John Carpenter's *The Thing*, was a landmark sci-fi thriller-chiller unfairly dismissed by several critics as *Alien* on ice. Two movies, two beings, two very different stories...

Burgers sizzle, milkshakes slurp. The year is 1975 and John Carpenter is sitting in a Big Boy restaurant in Hollywood with Stuart Cohen, a TV producer at Universal. Over lunch they talk movies and Carpenter pitches an idea for a remake of Christian Nyby/Howard Hawks' B-movie classic *The Thing From Another World*





‘EVERYONE SEEMED
TO FORGET THAT E.T.
WASN’T REAL’

CARLO RAMBALDI

(1951). “Let’s go back and do it right,” Carpenter tells his friend. Cohen pauses mid burger-munch... “How?”

Hawks based his paranoid classic on John W Campbell’s 1938 novella *Who Goes There?*, a clammy tale about an alien attacking scientists in the Antarctic. “I read the story before I saw Hawks’ film,” Carpenter recalls. “I guess I was about 10. Even then, I realised that the whole nature of Campbell’s Thing was different from that of Hawks’.”

Back in 1951, Hawks didn’t have the technology to put a shape-shifting alien on-screen so he went with a bloke in a boiler suit instead. What would happen, Carpenter asks Cohen, if someone used today’s state-of-the-art special effects to do the job properly? Two years later they sell the concept to Universal. Six years after that, Carpenter is hired for the \$10 million remake of *The Thing From Another World*. It’s a boyhood dream come true...

Carpenter wasn’t the only American kid dreaming about little green men in the ’50s. In Cincinnati, Ohio, young Steven Spielberg was also watching the skies...

“One night my dad woke me up and took me out in a field, laid out a picnic blanket, and we stared at a fantastic meteor shower,” Spielberg recalls. “I saw those streaks of light moving across the sky and it gave a jump-start to my imagination.” After his parents split up, the idea grew: “It was a childhood fantasy of mine to tell the story of a special best friend who rescues a young boy from the messiness of a divorce.”

Fast forward to 1980 and Spielberg’s in the middle of the Tunisian desert, waiting while his crew set up the next shot on *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. He’s thinking about *Night Skies*, a script he’s developing with John Sayles. It’s a movie about a bunch of evil aliens terrorising an isolated farmhouse. In the desert’s still silence, Spielberg suddenly awakens to something: he doesn’t want to make a scary movie about aliens (“It went against my grain as a storyteller... I saw I was doing nothing more than harking back to the old days of *Earth Vs The Flying Saucers*, *Invaders From Mars* and *War Of The Worlds*”). What, he wonders, would it be like if the aliens were friendly?

Grabbing the first screenwriter he saw – Harrison Ford’s then girlfriend Melissa Mathison, who’d written horsey kids’ flick *The Black Stallion* the previous year – Spielberg starts dictating the story. The first draft would be titled *E.T. And Me*, a movie about a boy and his pet alien...

Juneau, Alaska. The summer of 1981. It’s bitterly, savagely cold. Principal photography has begun on *The Thing* and the all-male cast and crew are freezing their proverbials off. “It was cold, it was grim, and it was gruelling,” winces Carpenter. Filming on a glacier by day and getting drunk in the town at night is taking its toll on the crew; Kurt >>



Russell and the rest of the cast are moaning about the fact that no one knows what the Thing's supposed to look like.

Everyone's frozen, tired and pissed off. Especially the locals. "We were in a rough-and-tumble mining town," remembers Carpenter. "Saturday nights were rough. Here were these Hollywood guys, actors and technicians, hungrily and drunkenly pawing at each other for the very few women." After one drunken driller pulled a gun on actor TK Carter, Carpenter began counting down the days to his flight back to Hollywood.

'THE THING IS ALL JAW-CRASHING, STATE-OF-THE-ART GROSS-OUT'

Cold-blooded killer: *The Thing* derived its chills from frozen cabin fever and grisly special effects.

Laird International Studios, Culver City, October 1981. On the set of *E.T.*, Steven Spielberg is listening to Drew Barrymore's stories about being in a band. "She's six years old and she's telling me that she's going to do a 20-city tour in America with her punk rock band. Her stories kept getting bigger and bigger and wilder and wilder," he laughs.

Fun was the watchword on *E.T.* "It was an easy, familial atmosphere," says actor Peter Coyote, who played lead scientist Keys. Surrounded by cute little nippers like Barrymore and Henry Thomas, not to mention an even cuter alien, Spielberg encouraged cast and crew to enjoy themselves. There was pizza, Coke and Reese's Pieces galore. On the day of shooting the Hallowe'en scenes, the director stepped out of his trailer in full-on Mrs Doubtfire drag. But best of all, there was *E.T.*

"Everyone seemed to forget he wasn't real," recalls *E.T.*'s Oscar-snaffling designer Carlo Rambaldi. "They definitely treated him like another actor." Spielberg wanted the perfect balance between too scary and too Disney. What Rambaldi created was a cute brown alien that looked like a cross between an aging turtle and a squished turd.

It was perfect. Dwarf actors and a dozen technicians ("E.T.'s 12 hearts" Spielberg called them) brought *E.T.* to cuddly life. The "phone home" instant catchphrase and glowing fingertip worked their cutesy magic, but it was the deep, soulful eyes that really hooked. "I wanted the eyes to be very important," says Spielberg. "We did all kinds of police composites to get the right look on *E.T.*'s face." Finally, after transposing a picture of Einstein's eyes on

a five-day-old baby's face, Spielberg cracked it. "The result was wonderful – an amazing combination of embryonic innocence and wizened ancestry."

Hartland Effects Studio, North Hollywood, 1982. The place has been deserted since the *Buck Rogers In The 25th Century* TV show wrapped over a year ago. Now there are dogs' snouts and bits of limbs scattered on the benches; a latex decapitated head with spider legs combo on the floor... It's all the twisted work of 22-year-old SFX guru Rob Bottin.

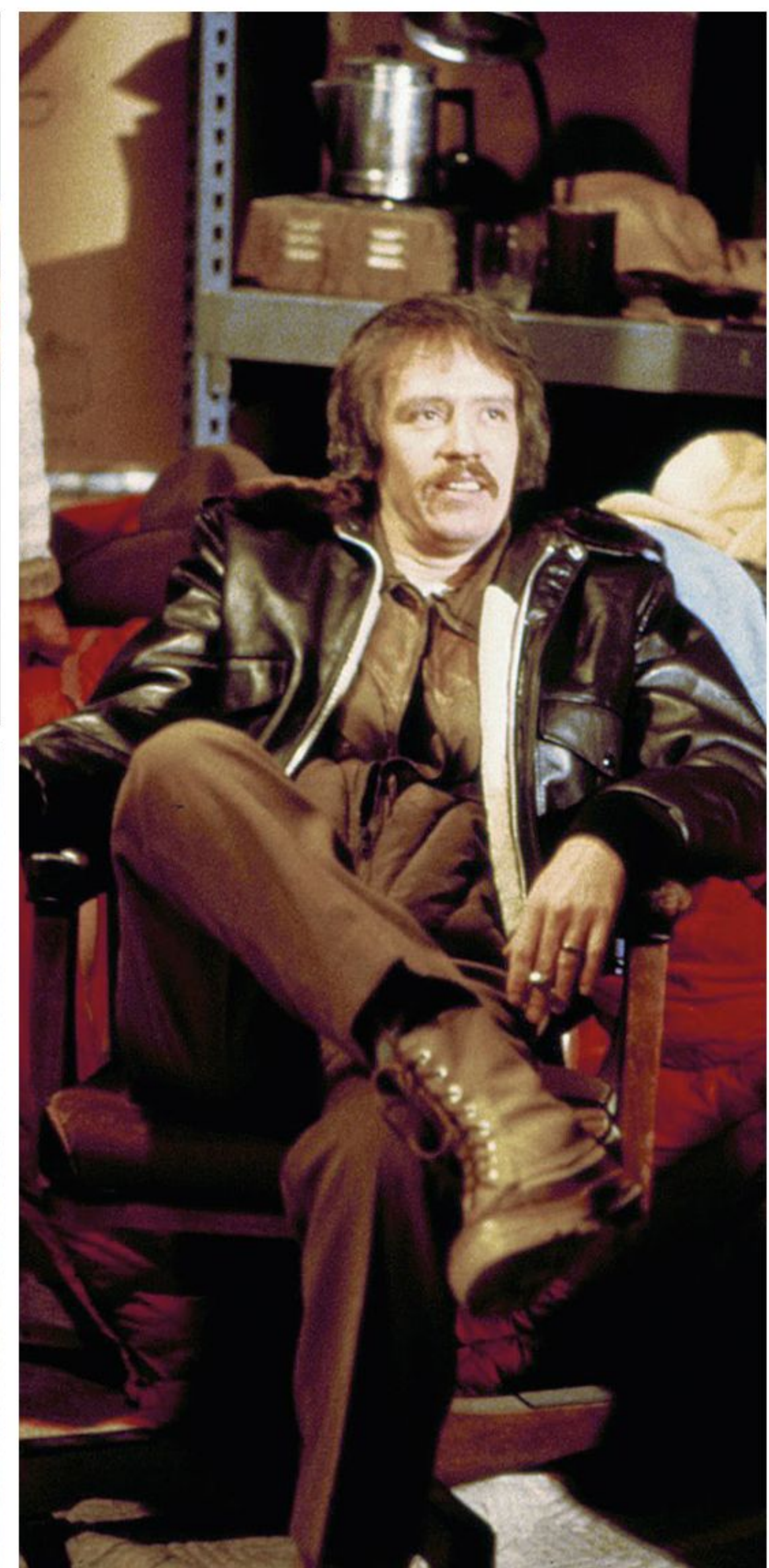
Bottin knows the special effects on *The Thing* have to be really special. "I told John, 'Look, I don't want to compete with *Alien* because it raised audience expectations about what a monster from outer space would be. When it turns out to be a guy in a suit, it isn't going to cut it. People want more..."

"I want to see just enough!" says Spielberg, as his crew shoot *E.T.*'s opening scenes. He's convinced that keeping his extra-

terrestrial puppet in the shadows is the way forward. Show too much and the movie's air of wonder will be ruined. "I didn't want to show *E.T.*'s face for about 25 minutes. We would see him in silhouette, we would always view him in backlight, but you would never get a good look until much later..."

John Carpenter isn't happy: "The fans think they own these films. They don't, damn it!" He's just discovered that several pre-production sketches have been stolen from the Hartland set. Security is beefed up to prevent further leaks. Still, if the robbers reckon they've got an exclusive on the look of the Thing they're in for a rude awakening.

You see, the thing is, there was no Thing. Armed with a \$1.5 million budget, Bottin and his team created a monster movie without a monster. Since its premise is a shape-shifting alien that can take any form, the Thing doesn't really exist in any singular form. Instead, there are lots of Things: a gaping, jagged chest cavity, a decapitated spider head, and a husky dog with its insides on the outside. It's all jaw-crashing, pre-CGI, state-of-the-art gross out.



E.T. VS THE THING



Heart-melting: audiences warmed to *E.T.*'s blend of careworn and childlike innocence.



WHAT IF... E.T. AND THE THING HAD A FIGHT?

ROUND ONE OUTPOST 31, THE ANTARCTIC

The Thing crashes in his spacecraft. E.T. turns up with Elliott on his flying bicycle. They get to it: The Thing assimilates Elliott, turning his guts inside out. E.T. jabs The Elliott Thing where it hurts with his burning finger. The Thing sprouts spider-legs out of Elliott's noggin and scuttles away. "Be good!" chirps E.T.

ROUND TWO ELLIOTT'S HOUSE, SUBURBIA

E.T. flies out of the closet, headbutting The Thing using his telescopic neck. The Thing lassos E.T. with some slimy tendrils and tries to assimilate him. E.T. counters by grabbing a six-pack of Coors from the fridge. Chug, chug, chug. E.T. gets sloshed and pukes up The Thing. It's a draw.

ROUND THREE A FOREST

The Thing lures E.T. towards a cliff edge using Reese's Pieces, but the chocolates run out too soon. E.T.'s buddies tip up in their spaceship; The Thing assimilates them one by one then escapes in the UFO. E.T. phones home. No answer. The Thing wins on points, E.T. is shipped off to Area 51 for vivisection.

Winner On a technical knockout, The Thing.

Spielberg has his own concerns about security. Shooting under the phoney title of *This Boy's Life* – "a comedy about antics and lifestyles of boys living in Southern California today" – the whole production of *E.T.* is wrapped in secrecy. When the movie finally opens on 11 June 1982, there's barely any pre-release publicity. It doesn't need it. The reviews do it all.

"A dream of a movie, a bliss-out," trills Pauline Kael in *The New Yorker*. "A fabulous masterpiece that leaves all who see it with a warm and radiant glow of optimism and joy," gushes *The New York Times*. *E.T.* gets a standing ovation from the sniffy culture vultures at Cannes. The box office catches fire: *E.T.* takes \$11.8 million in its first weekend, \$12.4 million the next week and \$12.8 million in the third. It becomes a licence to print money. Universal cranks out *E.T.* toys, lunch boxes, books and, um, ladies' panties with that wrinkly alien face slapped on the crotch.

Audiences can't get enough of *E.T.*'s messianic magic. "It was a truly religious experience," panted studio bigwig Sid Sheinberg after the first public preview in Honolulu. "It must be a little bit like the way people feel if they think they've seen God." Uplifting and family-friendly, the cuddly sci-fi flick picked up four Oscars, including one for John Williams' heartstring-twanging score. Everybody loved *E.T.*

Everybody except John Carpenter. *The Thing* hit screens two weeks after *E.T.*-mania convinced audiences that extra-terrestrials would come in peace. "*E.T.* came out ahead of us and it became this huge hit," says Carpenter. "And its message was the exact opposite of *The Thing*. As Steven said at the time, 'I thought that the audiences needed an uplifting cry.' And boy was he right."

The Thing opened on 25 June 1982 to a chilly reception. The reviews stank and audiences seemed to be personally affronted by the dripping, gelatinous orgy of SFX gore and the downbeat, ambiguous ending.

No one cared if it was a smart AIDS allegory or a technical landmark, they just didn't want to see it. "For some of them, the emotional content of the movie was too strong," remembers Carpenter of the first test screening. "For others the monster was too strong, or the hopelessness of the story was too uncompromising."

Written off by one critic as "a little above pornography", the movie swiftly vanished from theatres. It didn't scoop awards (Ennio Morricone's sparse score was nominated for a Razzie anti-Oscar) and Carpenter's career nosedived. He was even fired from his next project by the suits at Universal: "I was treated like slime. I was just good enough to lie down with the dogs." It wasn't until *The Thing* was released on video that it was recognised as what it was: an overlooked classic.

So, *E.T.* touched souls while *The Thing* turned stomachs. But a quarter of a century later, despite being from different planets and worlds apart, they both deserve kudos as two of the greatest post-*Star Wars* sci-flicks: cuddly feel-good and scary feel-bad. 🦋



MASTERS OF *ILLUSION*

With the rise of George Lucas's Industrial Light & Magic, the 1980s saw special effects becoming more sophisticated and gob-smacking than ever...

WORDS **PAUL BRADSHAW**



Puppet masters:
behind the
scenes of *The
Dark Crystal*

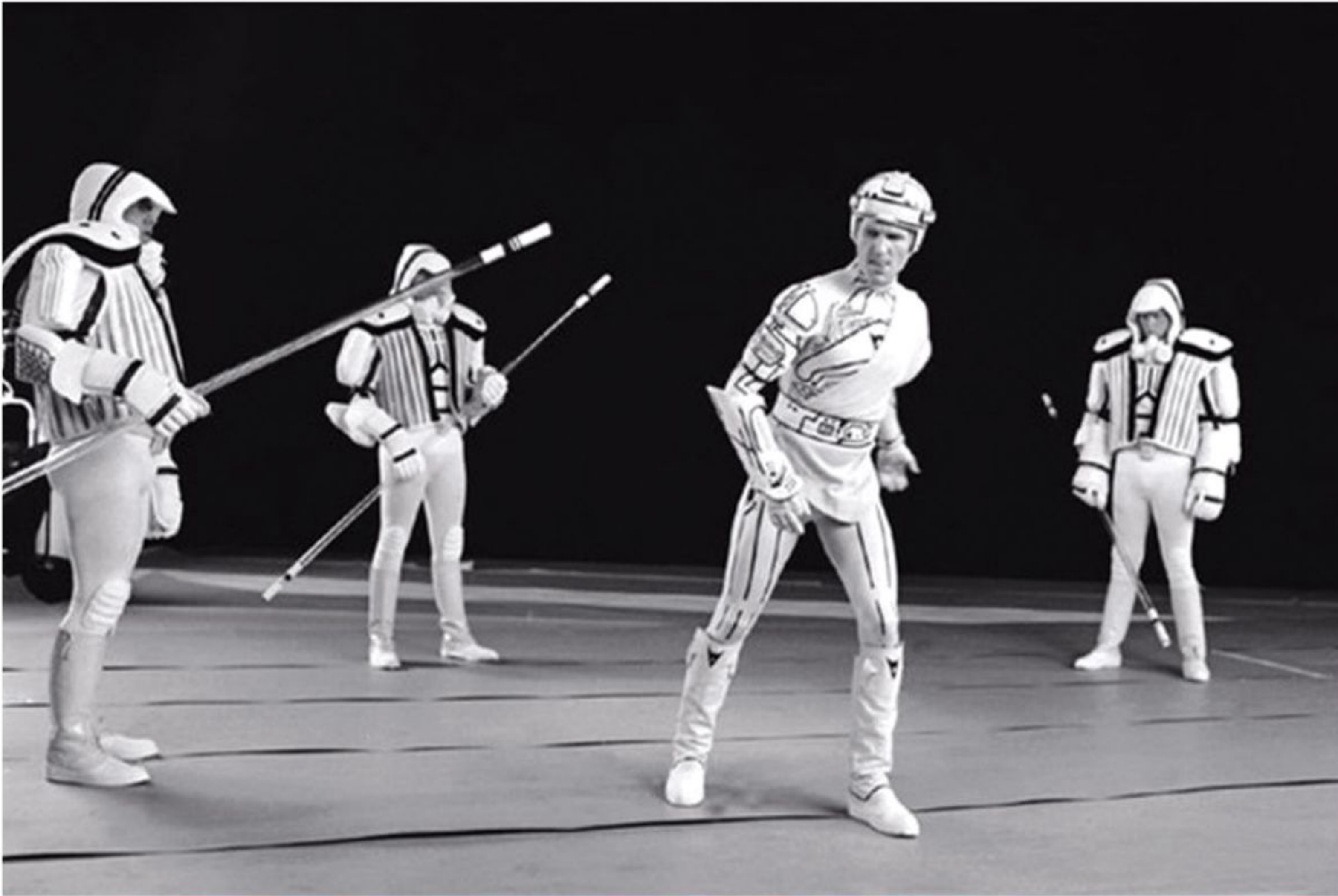


It's almost easy to forget the '80s ever happened in the world of special effects. 1979 saw the likes of *Alien*, *Mad Max* and *The Muppet Movie* all breaking new ground, while 1990 had *Tremors*, *Die Hard 2* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* still doing pretty much the same thing. Despite a few inroads, the digital revolution definitely *didn't* happen in the analogue decade, and most of the puppets and muppets it usurped had seen more than enough action by the time they finally retired. And yet, take a look under the hood and it's a different story altogether... It might have started before and ended after them, but the '80s truly was the golden age of special effects.

To give a bit of context, the "silver age" started sometime around 1920. Pioneers like George Méliès (*La Voyage Dans La Lune*) and Willis O'Brien (*King Kong*) led a period of invention and innovation that took cinema from the end of the pier to the ends of the Earth. But by the time the mid '70s rolled around, no one cared. With a few radical exceptions, sci-fi was a B-movie idea for an old generation, fantasy didn't have a place in the political climate, and innovation only came from greater realism, faster lenses and location shooting (and, err, France). And then *Star Wars* happened.

When George Lucas first dreamt up his space opera, he couldn't find anyone who knew how to make it. Starting from scratch and forming the company that would later become Industrial >>

SPECIAL EFFECTS



Space age:
Disney dove
into CGI with
1982's *Tron*





Light & Magic, Lucas began a quiet revolution in his own garage. As soon as *Star Wars* debuted in 1977 – and everyone saw *that* opening shot – Hollywood was back in big business.

Coming after a decade of paranoia, social anxiety and recession, the cultural landscape of the '80s was shaped by a very different set of goals. Escapism, nostalgia and aggression all vied with each other to provide an outlet for the collective cheer/scream of an entire generation – and that meant sci-fi, fantasy and horror.

Enter ILM. In the first few years, Lucas' pet project was little more than a few nerds and a plank of wood. "We bought parts for models from surplus stores," remembers ILM modelmaker Steve Galaway, best known for moving a silk ghost through a tank of water for three weeks to perfect the "wrath of God" flying out of the Ark Of The Covenant. "The screening room at ILM was furnished in Goodwill sofas with the springs exposed. You'd get up and rip the seat out of your trousers. All the money was put into the show, not the furniture."

Ending the decade as the premier effects house in Hollywood, ILM ushered in some of cinema's biggest and most memorable moments in FX history – sometimes refining time-worn techniques, sometimes inventing solutions to new problems.

First up: the stuff you were supposed to notice. Attracting the best model makers in the business, ILM started with the makeshift kit-work of The Death Star and went on to build entire miniature practical sets ranging from pirate galleons (*The Goonies*) to demon oesophagi (*Poltergeist*).

Combined with advances in miniature photography, the team were able to take us over forests in *E.T. The Extra-terrestrial* (1982), through a mine in *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* (1984) and up into the clouds for the opening of *Explorers* (1985) – all built in miniature from wooden sticks, Sellotape and cotton-wool.

To take it a stage further, ILM resurrected Ray Harryhausen's technique of 'Stop And Go Motion', now forever associated with Wallace and Gromit. Excruciating, but effective, the painstaking process involves taking a still photograph of a miniature model, moving it



a fraction of an inch, taking another photo – and repeating 24 times for every second of film.

Best remembered in *The Empire Strikes Back's* opening AT-AT attack and the demon dogs of *Ghostbusters*, the real showcase came in Matthew Robbins' *Dragonslayer* (1981), where a 30ft dragon took the lead role, one frame at a time. Like many of the best special effects, the dragon was the result of a variety of different techniques working together. As well as stop motion, Disney artist Danny Lee built a 16ft head and neck assembly (and a 20ft tail), controlling the rig via radio cables, air bladders and levers.

Operating a giant mechanical dragon wasn't a skill set that many people had in Hollywood, but there was one group of artists who knew exactly what it was like to hold the strings. The Jim Henson Foundation was born during the



'Blade Runner pushed the effects envelope by combining travelling matte shots with models and multipass exposures'



Face value: the melting effect from *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*

SPECIAL EFFECTS



Pure fantasy: the firebreather in *Dragonslayer* (top), *The Dark Crystal* (middle), face-smooching in *Poltergeist*

migration of *The Muppet Show* to the big screen in 1979, but quickly grew into a huge variety of side projects. From *Empire's* Yoda to the elaborate fantasy dreamscapes of *Labyrinth*, Henson's opus came in 1982 with *The Dark Crystal* – handcrafting a film *entirely* without visible human actors.

Behind the scenes, even bigger things were happening. Matte paintings were traditionally used to take us everywhere from The Emerald City to Xanadu, but it wasn't until the '80s that advances in optical compositing allowed the technique to go unnoticed. Remember the Ewok village? Pankot palace in *Temple Of Doom*? The big room where they stick the Ark Of The Covenant (the first time)? All just *really* good paintings layered up on sheets of glass and placed over the negative.

Still considered to be the best use of mattes, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) pushed the envelope even further by combining travelling matte shots with models and "multipass exposures" – essentially just shooting the same shot 16 times from the exact same angle, lowly building up layers of depth.

Optical Compositing saw more action – literally – whenever anything needed to move fast (speeder bikes, X-wings, the USS Enterprise) but the really special effects had to be finished by hand. Animation had come a long way since *Snow White* but the principle, even for live action, was still the same. 'Rotoscoping' is the technique of tracing over film footage with paint, creating a miniature matte, of sorts. Everything from Luke's lightsaber and the lightning bolts shooting out of the Emperor's fingers to the Ghostbuster's plasma blasters and the evil spirits of *Poltergeist* (1982) were animation effects – added to the film in the same way as just about everything that *wasn't* Bob Hoskins in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988).

Outside the big studios, innovation was even more of a necessity. The horror boom gave new filmmakers the opportunity to experiment, but


little of the money they needed to do it. The result was more Sellotape and cotton-wool – and more bright ideas that would rewrite the old ones.

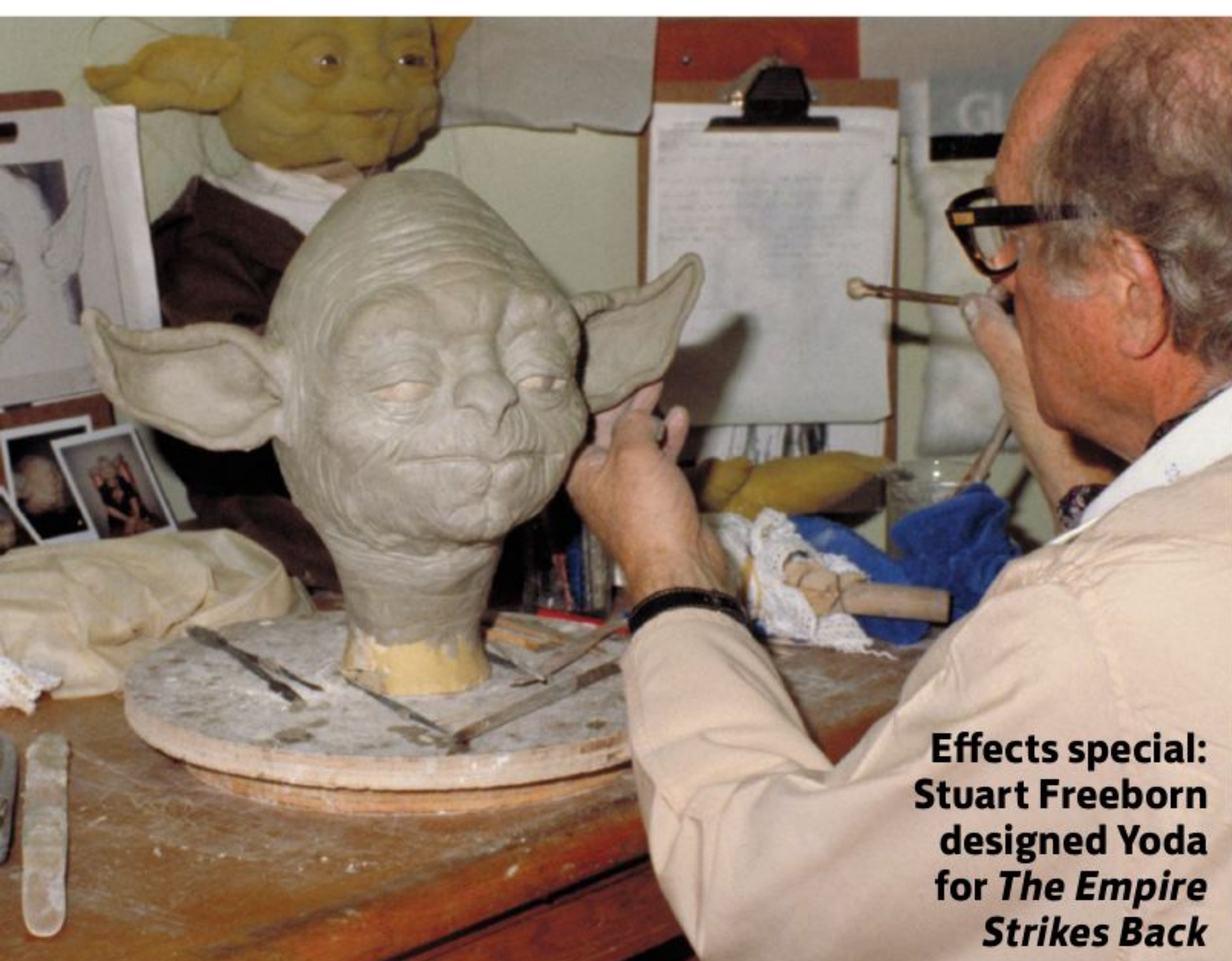
Low budget shockers like *The Evil Dead* (1981) and *A Nightmare On Elm Street* (1984) improvised with homemade props and camera tricks to get their blood flowing (literally, in the case of *Elm Street's* 'bed death' scene, the whole set was built on a gimble so it could be flipped upside down and flooded with red stuff), while bigger films spent all their cash on prosthetics.

Still recognised as the best in their field, *An American Werewolf In London* (1981), *The Howling* (1981) and *The Thing* (1982) pioneered the art of prosthetic make-up, terrifying audiences with creature transformation scenes that mixed stop motion, robotic prosthesis and elaborate make-up. Thanks to their eye-popping work behind the scenes, FX wizards Stan Winston and Rick Baker became unlikely stars – and won Oscars.

Unlikely or not, the men and women behind the masks were becoming more and more well known – just as the secrets of their magic tricks were filling the pages of film magazines and influencing a new generation of filmmakers. The only problem was that by the end of the '80s, the wave was about to break.

ILM had been experimenting with digital effects throughout the decade – taking the lessons learnt from Disney's *Tron* (1982), showcasing the first extensive use of CG animation, and trying to find a way to refine their own techniques in a computer. Their animation division (soon to be called Pixar) had been making leaps and bounds with textures and motion blur, and ILM's work on *The Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985) produced the first photorealistic CG character in the form of a stained-glass knight.

By 1989, water effects were perfected in *The Abyss* and digital composites in *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* – both released while *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* was being written, soon to change the whole industry overnight. The golden age was over, but what an age it was. 



Effects special: Stuart Freeborn designed Yoda for *The Empire Strikes Back*



THE 13 GREATEST JIM

Laughing in the face of CGI, Jim Henson's legendary Creature Shop is where the real magic happened in the '80s – where fantasy came spectacularly to life. We celebrate the best bits of rubber, fuzz, felt and fur with a countdown of Jim's most wonderful creations...

13 THE GELFLINGS

The Dark Crystal (1982)

The dancing, prancing, fun-loving villagers of the planet Thra are Henson's Hobbits. Hunted down by the forces of evil because of their youth-giving qualities and general loveliness, the girls have ineffectual wings, the boys play flutes, and they all look a bit like the Olsen twins.



12 THE FIREYS

Labyrinth (1986)

Notable for being able to juggle their own body parts – which they do during the 'Chilly Down' musical segment – these mad circus birds sing the only musical number in the movie not to feature David Bowie. Though not deliberately dangerous, they still almost put an end to Sarah's journey through the Labyrinth by trying to pull off her head.



11 HANS THE HEDGEHOG

The Storyteller (1987)

Henson based the *Storyteller* series on memories of his grandparents telling him folk tales. John Hurt and a talking dog narrate the tale of Hans, a cursed man/hedgehog who rides a chicken, plays the bagpipes and haunts the dreams of every kid who sees him.

10 THE WORM

Labyrinth (1986)

This small cockney slug lives in the walls of the Labyrinth and invites passers-by inside for a cuppa. When Jennifer Connelly's teen runaway asks for directions to the castle of the Goblin King, he misunderstands and sends her off in the wrong direction – but he does rock a jaunty red scarf and a blue mohawk.



9 THE DEVILS

The Storyteller (1987)

Utterly horrible little red bastards from episode 'The Soldier And Death', directed by Henson and written by Anthony Minghella. The rubbery-winged demons plague a once-great palace, until they fall foul of a soldier with a magic deck of cards.

8 SIR DIDYMUS

Labyrinth (1986)

An intrepid fox terrier who gallops around on an Old English Sheepdog and guards the Goblin City bridge for David Bowie's Goblin King. The Don Quixote of the Muppet-verse, the chivalrous Didymus is the first to rush in and the last to understand why – swapping sides to take on Jareth when Sarah asks nicely. Tally ho!



7 HOGGLE

Labyrinth (1986)

Also known as Higgle, Hogwart, Hedgewart and Hogbrain (on account of no one being able to remember his name), this grumpy dwarf lives in the Labyrinth, snuffing out fairies and collecting shiny objects. The most expressive of *Labyrinth's* weird and wonderful characters (including David Bowie), he moans, groans and snaps his way through every scene, but we still love him. Just check out his brilliant Dad dancing in the final musical number!



HENSON CREATIONS

6 RED FRAGGLE

Fraggle Rock (1983-1987)

With *The Muppet Show* over, Henson's next big telly project took us underground. The Fraggles were a family, but it was Red that leaped out: sporty, hyper-enthusiastic and the catalyst for every adventure beyond the Fraggle hole. Without her, we suspect her slacker pals would never have woken up long enough to bother messing with the workaholic Doozers or the lumbering Gorgs.



5 FIZZGIG

The Dark Crystal (1982)

Half startled dog, half tennis ball retrieved from a drain, Fizzgig is Gelfling Kira's cute, spherical pet who rolls around behind her wherever she goes. He might bark at strangers, squawk when he's unhappy, and flash several rows of sharp teeth – but every kid who saw *The Dark Crystal* wanted one.



4 YODA

The Empire Strikes Back (1980)

Not just the voice of Yoda, Creature Shop co-founder Frank Oz also had a big part to play in the creation of the little Dagobah dude. "I was the one who put all the elements of Yoda together," he recalls. "[*Creature sculptor*] Wendy Froud helped out with the character and two of Jim's people worked the cables." George Lucas himself has called Yoda "the illegitimate child of Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy" – something he should have remembered before making him all CG in *Attack Of The Clones*...



3 KERMIT THE FROG

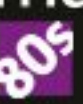
The Great Muppet Caper (1981)

Kermit made his debut in 1955, but he was a firm fixture in the '80s. Made from Henson's mother's coat when the puppeteer was still in college, Kermit never went away: *Sesame Street* resident, *Muppet Show* host, movie star, pop star, institution. Throughout, Kermit – ambitious and upbeat no matter what – became the on-screen avatar of his creator's ideals. Henson died in 1990 but lives on through his most iconic creation.



1 THE SKEKSIS

The Dark Crystal (1982)

Described by concept artist Brian Froud as "part reptile, part predatory bird, part dragon", Henson came by the design of the Skeksis after seeing an illustrated Lewis Carroll poem featuring two crocodiles in a bathroom. The result is Jim Henson's most iconic and terrifying creation. The Skeksis had scabby beaks, plucked-turkey skin and a whining scream that still makes grown men cry. And they were as ugly to puppeteer as they were to look at. "There were days I could work 'inside' my Skeksis character, the High Priest, without noticing the weight," recalled Henson on the film's release. "But if I was feeling the least bit tired or rundown, it was as if a building had caved in on me." The Skeksis top this list for one crucial reason – they're guilty of being almost too real, with no place in your nightmares, let alone a family movie. 



2 LUDO

Labyrinth (1986)

Initially called a 'yeti' in the film, Ludo is Sarah's loyal sidekick, defender, and the most intricately designed creature in *Labyrinth*. Performing the kindly beast was a challenge shared by puppeteers Ron Mueck and Rob Mills, which they did from inside the costume via the screens of two tiny monitors strapped to their stomachs. A further three puppeteers operated remote radio control devices to control Ludo's expressive facial movements. Ludo *Total Film* friend.





WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

IT WAS THE ULTIMATE HOLLYWOOD TEAM-UP – AND A SHOWSTOPPING FX TRIUMPH. 30 YEARS LATER SIMON BLAND HEADS BACK TO **TOONTOWN**

I wanted to do something that incorporated the two loves of my childhood: cartoon characters and noir mysteries,” reveals author Gary K Wolf. In 1981, he used this unusual combo as the inspiration for the book behind Robert Zemeckis’s groundbreaking 1988 hit *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. While audiences 30 years on revel in Steven Spielberg’s pop-culture mash-up *Ready Player One*, it was back in Toon Town where the mega-director first flexed his unparalleled Hollywood sway to produce a film unlike anything seen before. A cartoon live-action hybrid that did the impossible and introduced Mickey Mouse to Bugs Bunny.

“I was watching Saturday morning cartoons, purely for research,” smiles Wolf, recalling his route into the story, “and I became taken with

the commercials. I saw Captain Crunch and Tony the Tiger talking to real kids and nobody seemed to think that was odd. That was when the light bulb went off: What kind of world would it be if cartoon characters were real?” Riding a wave of inspiration, Wolf quickly began populating his big idea. “I came up with private eye Eddie Valiant, who I named after my father and I came up with Roger Rabbit who I based on a crossbreed of Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny,” he explains. “Mickey Mouse is the straight-ahead good guy and never screws around. Bugs Bunny will tell you one thing and then put a stick of dynamite down your pants – I wanted a character that was an amalgamation of the two. Roger Rabbit is a good guy who’s also a trickster. I also came up with his wife Jessica who I based on Tex Avery’s Red Hot Riding Hood.”

>>



WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT





Giving generations of children nightmares

Word spread quickly regarding Wolf's unusual mix of kids' fiction and crime noir. Handing the book to publishers, it wasn't long before some unexpected people came knocking. "I got a call and the voice on the phone said, 'This is Roy Disney from the Disney Corporation. I wondered if you'd be interested in selling us the rights to your book because we'd like to make it into a movie.' I thought it was my friends having one off on me," he admits. It wasn't. Having turned down *ET* and *Star Wars*, Disney was in dire need of a hit and that's exactly what they saw in *Roger Rabbit*. "They wanted Roger, they wanted Jessica, they wanted Baby Herman and they wanted Toon Town," says Wolf. "Of course, I was thrilled but frankly, I didn't think this movie was filmable."

It turned out Wolf was right. *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*, with its toon characters speaking in comic-strip word balloons, wasn't filmable in its current form unless Disney wanted a silent movie.



Jessica's not bad – she's just drawn that way

Many attempts were made to fix it and then in 1985, everything changed. "Disney did something they'd never done before and brought in an outside producer. That guy's name was Steven Spielberg," says Wolf. "He brought in Bob Zemeckis who had been offered the project in '80 or '81 but turned it down because he didn't think he could pull it off. Now Steve was involved, he obviously thought he could do it. That was really the turning point. Once Steve and Bob Z got involved, the project took off and never looked back."

WHITE RABBIT

Things moved quickly but with such a lofty task ahead of them (full of brand-new filmmaking techniques), it was far from business as usual. "I knew about it before the script because I was used to help them audition the Eddie Valiant character," says the voice of Roger Rabbit himself, Charles Fleischer. "I had to be there off-camera while they were doing screen tests so that gave me a clue as to the process they were going to be utilising – recording the voice live on set, then animating immediately after. The people involved were such high calibre that I had no doubts that it would be incredible."

Having impressed during screentests, Fleischer was formally offered the role and began work on bringing the character to life. First stop: the voice. "It was kind of a cross between John Huston and Ruth Gordon," he tells *SFX*. "The more I did it, the more it became Roger. I had to develop the speech impediment – the 'pb-pb-pb-please' – that was a requirement," explains Fleischer of Roger's trademark motormouth. Also as a stand-up comedian, he didn't struggle relating to the crowd-pleasing aspects of his carrot-loving counterpart. "He was more like me than any character I've ever played and he was a damn cartoon," says Fleischer candidly. "What does that tell you?"



Lou Hirsch voiced Baby Herman, the cigar-smoking toon baby



Roger has a near miss with the toon-destroying Dip

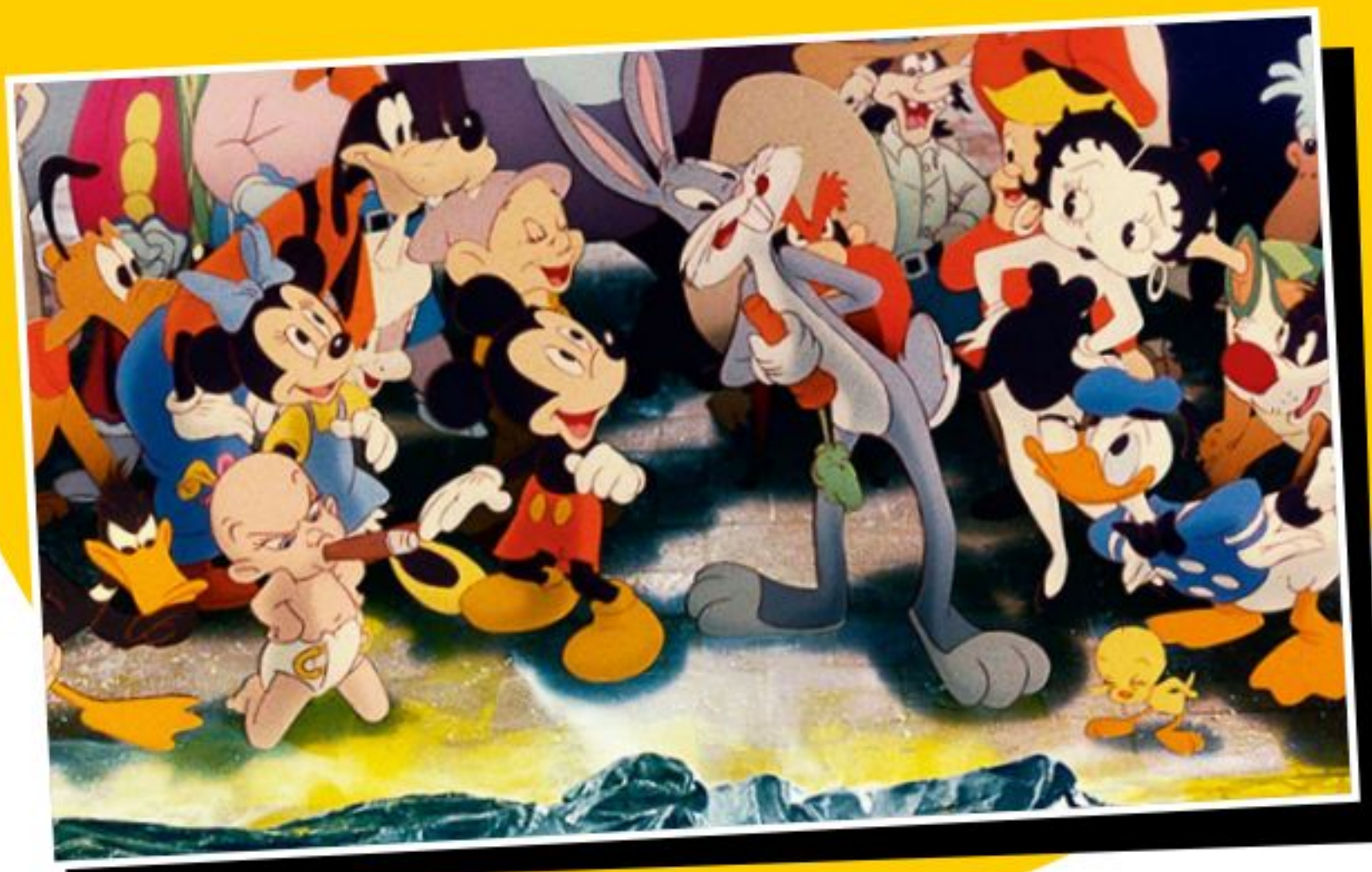
That said, this was no ordinary voiceover role. Like his live-action colleagues, Fleischer was present on set – and even in costume – providing a proto-motion capture performance. "They thought I was out of my mind," says Fleischer, recalling how co-stars Bob Hoskins and Christopher Lloyd reacted to seeing him dressed in full rabbit regalia. "I think they were a little cautious as to the validity of my sanity but after a while it did add to the general feel of the whole process. For instance, if Bob reached over and grabbed me, he's working with this space in front of him where I will be, so I had to react to that. I called it trans-projectional acting, where I'm projecting myself into a physical space in front of another actor. It was a groundbreaking technique," he explains. "No one had ever done that before."

Production on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* took three years, with the film debuting at New York's Radio City Music Hall in 1988 and Zemeckis' crew working on it until the day before release. "They

BUGS' LIFE

How Disney got the bunny

One of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*'s biggest hurdles was convincing Disney and Warner Bros to collaborate. A near impossible task – unless you're Steven Spielberg. "Back in '81 Roy Disney went to Warner Bros and said we want to use Bugs Bunny in a 10-second cameo," recalls Wolf. "Warner Bros said there's no way Bugs Bunny is ever going to be available for a Disney movie. Five years later, Spielberg makes an identical request and Warner Bros says of course – but what about Wile E Coyote, the Roadrunner, Yosemite Sam, Tweety Bird and Sylvester? The only restriction was that Bugs had to be on screen whenever Mickey was. They also had to have the same number of lines," reveals Wolf. "You can go count them!"



WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT



“I THINK I SOILED MY GARMENTS WATCHING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME”

longevity. “It’s a classic because it’s great storytelling. It’s not a kids’ movie, it’s not an adults’ movie – it’s just a movie. It was part of audiences’ lives,” he says. “They watched it every day or a million times a day and it allowed me to become part of something that is indeed historic.”

With 2018 marking the film’s 30th birthday, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* – and the techniques it pioneered – feel more relevant than ever, with sequel talk never too far away. It begs the question: what would Roger Rabbit be up to these days? “I think he’d just be doing the same thing,” suggests Fleischer, “making people laugh, trying to get work, eating carrot cake...” Without warning, Roger chimes in: ‘Well they don’t make films like this anymore, I tell ya’. Being a part of this picture is something you’ll never forget! Jeez, I wouldn’t mind a sequel but I don’t think it’s going to happen. It ain’t necessary as long as you got the first one as good as it was, and I tell ya’ mister, that’s as good as it gets!”



really had to make three movies,” says Wolf, “live-action, animated and a combination of the two so it looked like they were in the same movie. They couldn’t tell whether it was going to be a hit but it surprised everybody and became the highest grossing movie of 1988, winning Academy Awards. Now we have Toon Town at Disneyland,” he smiles.

“I think I soiled my garments,” admits Fleischer on seeing the film for the first time. “I’d seen snippets along the way but the finished product was groundbreaking. As for Roger’s performance, after he finds Jessica playing Patty Cake and he’s sitting alone in an alley, sad and somewhat tearful – that moment always stood out to me because my youngest daughter is also named Jessica. It was rather profound.”

This heartfelt reception was also shared by audiences. “When the movie came out on VHS, people started showing it to their kids, so a whole new generation found it. When it came out on DVD,

the same thing happened. It’s a cultural thing,” suggests Wolf. “I think the main reason *Roger Rabbit* has succeeded is because it doesn’t trivialise animation. I’ve talked to people who are 50 who say they still have nightmares about Judge Doom. It’s a childish concept used to present an adult story and I think why it’s been successful for so long is because it’s timeless.”

LOONY TOON

Wolf’s not wrong. In 2016, the film was inducted into the National Film Registry, preserving it forever for future generations. “I’m amazed that this was all based on something that I came up with while watching Saturday morning cartoons,” laughs Wolf. “Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to have such an impact on popular culture. It’s just astounding. When I die, if on my tombstone it says ‘Gary K Wolf – He Created Roger Rabbit’ – that’d be enough.” Fleischer has similar thoughts on the film’s

FRAME UP

Blink and you’ll miss it

“Animators are known for doing a little bit of ‘wink, wink, nod, nod’,” smiles Fleischer. It’s true. Jokes hidden in between frames went by far too fast for the naked eye to catch – but not fast enough for DVD freeze frame to capture. “The movie’s filled with those things,” confirms Wolf. “The most infamous was where Vinny the Cab hits a telephone pole and sends Jessica and Eddie flying. As Jessica’s upside down, you see that she has no underwear on. It wasn’t salacious but that gave the movie a whole new dimension so people started watching it again in another way,” he adds. “Disney immediately removed them,” reveals Fleischer, “except there are lots of things that are still hidden...”



BACK TO THE NEAR FUTURE

10 THINGS THAT NEED TO HAPPEN BEFORE OCT 21, 2015

WORDS BY TOM FORDY ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CEMMICK

DEHYDRATED PIZZAS

IT'S THE FUTURE A CD-sized pizza is easily enough to feed a family. Two seconds in the Black & Decker Hydrator (a kind of anti-microwave) and it expands to a whopping 15-incher.

BACK TO REALITY Astronauts have been tucking into dehydrated grub since the 1960s. Domestically, it hasn't progressed much past the Pot Noodle.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY We're probably better off without them. A possible cure for the world hunger crisis might quickly turn into a world obesity crisis. Mmmmm, stuffed crust...

DOMESTIC FUSION ENERGY

IT'S THE FUTURE Garbage-guzzling Mr Fusion answers our energy and environmental problems, converting everyday waste into the 1.21 gigawatts needed for time travel.

BACK TO REALITY Fusion energy – replicating the power of the sun – has been in the works for decades, though boffins admit they're a long way from harnessing it, let alone sticking it on the car roof.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY Scientists be warned: don't rush the experiments on this one. Fusion accidents usually lead to the creation of a radioactive supervillain.

SMART CLOTHES

IT'S THE FUTURE Don't worry about lacing your shoes or even buying clothes that fit properly – they'll sort that out for themselves.

BACK TO REALITY Wearable technology (mostly pocket phone chargers) is certainly a thing but self-tying shoelaces remain elusive, despite Nike registering a patent and releasing replica trainers for charity in 2011.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY Until the fashion world catches up, we can meet it halfway by wearing trousers inside out and rocking two ties at once.

A RETURN TO ANALOGUE TELECOMS

IT'S THE FUTURE The McFlies circa 2015 might use videophones (or Skype, as some future people call them), but they still have a fax machine in every room.

BACK TO REALITY Even adding such futuristic features as, erm, scanning and copying won't bring the fax machine back from retro tech hell.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY Of course, there's always the chance the latest iOS update will finally send everyone over the edge and the ensuing meltdown will cause a technological devolution.

PERSONAL SOUND FX VESTS

IT'S THE FUTURE A wearable development in 21st century trash-talk, punctuating every insult with an appropriate sound effect – a chicken, for example.

BACK TO REALITY Like everything else, there's an app for it, rendering the waistcoat keyboard thingy redundant before it's started.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY Don't completely rule them out. It'll only take one hipster to model the sound FX vest round London-town and it could seriously take off (cue rocket launch noise).

So, after 25 years, the hoverboard is finally a reality (though it still doesn't work on water), transporting us slightly closer to *Back To The Future II*'s vision of... well, the future. But before we reach 21 October 2015, the date Doc and Marty travel to in the movie, there are many advances humankind still needs to make. And we'd better hurry up about it...



FROM THE
ARCHIVES
ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED
IN 2015

ANOTHER 15 JAWS FILMS

IT'S THE FUTURE *Jaws 19* is Hollywood's newest holographic blockbuster. Predictably, critics says it's "without bite".

BACK TO REALITY There have been significant advances in projecting real-time 3D images, and Apple has had holographic screens in the works since 2010, making the "holomax" cinema entirely feasible. Getting another 15 *Jaws* sequels greenlit before October, however, will be a tougher sell.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY If it happens, movie marketing will change forever. Who needs viral when you've got a holographic shark terrorising passers by?

FLYING CARS

IT'S THE FUTURE Marty arrives via the skyways of Hill Valley. Don't look surprised, McFly – everyone knows flying cars are standard in the future.

BACK TO REALITY A Slovakian company recently launched a prototype, the AeroMobil 3.0, which can do 100mph at altitudes of 9,800ft.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY No one's that impressed with flying (we've had planes for yonks). What we want are those flippy-round wheels that the future-DeLorean has. The cruising altitude of cool.

HI-TECH SLEEPING AIDS

IT'S THE FUTURE Doc knocks Jennifer out in seconds with a quick buzz of the "sleep-inducing alpha rhythm generator".

BACK TO REALITY The closest thing we have is a space-age eye-mask that uses gradually fading lights to induce sleep. Not quite the insomnia-busting quick fix we were hoping for.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY A real shame the technology hasn't caught up with this one yet. The gadget would be especially handy at work, festive family functions and crowded comic conventions.

DUST-REPELLENT PAPER

IT'S THE FUTURE Following the dust-repellent paper boom of the early 2000s, books like the *Sports Almanac*, with its retro-style jacket, are something of a collector's item. No wonder everyone's fighting over it.

BACK TO REALITY The development of more practical and advanced screen technology, such as the handy folding pocket tablet, has taken precedent over improving the quality of paper.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY Just think of all the money we'd save on comic bags.

FINGERPRINT SECURITY SYSTEMS

IT'S THE FUTURE Fingerprint ID is now standard (useful for identifying passed out time travellers) and has even replaced the house key.

BACK TO REALITY We already have Apple Touch ID and the "smart home" (using your iPad to open the fridge door etc) is apparently just a few years away.

THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY The downside is that younger versions of yourself can let themselves into your house and nose about as they please.



SCI-FI & FANTASY

TERMINATOR

IN 1984,
A SCRAP-METAL
B-MOVIE
CALLED THE
TERMINATOR
CHANGED
SCIENCE
FICTION,
CHANGED
CINEMA. IT WAS
SO GOOD YOU
JUST KNEW
HE'D BE BACK.
WE ROUND UP
CAST AND
CREW TO
RELIVE THE
HALCYON DAYS
OF THE
TERMINATOR

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1984

DIRECTOR James Cameron

SCREENPLAY James Cameron,
Gale Anne Hurd

CAST Arnold Schwarzenegger, Michael
Biehn, Linda Hamilton, Paul Winfield

BUDGET \$6.4m

BOX OFFICE \$78.4m

RUNNING TIME 107 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Orion Pictures

TAGLINE "The thing that won't die,
in the nightmare that won't end."

RELEASE DATE 26 October 1984

Hurd had been executive assistant to B-movie star Roger Corman and first met her future husband when Corman dispatched her to get an update on the troubled *Battle Beyond The Stars*. Employed to build spaceship miniatures, Cameron expressed his concerns to her. "I thought he was running the model shop, which actually wasn't the case," laughs Hurd, sitting in her production company's LA offices remembering James Cameron's legendary chutzpah. Bonding on the tough shoot (Cameron was appointed Art Director when the original guy got the sack), they discussed a filmmaking partnership – she as producer, he as director. The idea for *The Abyss* came up at this time but it was *The Terminator* that became their ticket. Rife with zeitgeist-tapping technophobia and a Holocaust vision of humanity's future, Cameron set out to craft a movie that functioned both "as a linear action story that a 12-year-old would think was the most rad picture he'd ever seen, and as science fiction that a 45-year-old Stanford English prof would think had some socio-political significance". Unusually for exploitation movies of the time, it was character-driven and possessed a female hero (which has since been a hallmark of Cameron's career, from *Aliens* to *Avatar*).

Not everyone was impressed; every studio passed. Recalls Hurd, "We got a copy of one studio's coverage that said, 'It's a confusing film about someone who's sent back from the future to save a young woman. They make love, they make bombs. The end.'" Eventually, they pulled together a patchwork of backers – Orion, HBO, Hemdale – each with their own suggestions: casting OJ Simpson as the Terminator, giving Kyle Reese a sidekick robot dog...

But united by a fierce promise not to sell each other out, Cameron and Hurd demanded creative control, and fended the dafter ideas off. Hurd bursts out laughing at the recollection. "It's true! The great thing about being young and naïve is that you don't know what you can't ask for. It wasn't in our contract with them that we had >>

ucked away in a modest Beverly Hills café, Michael Biehn grabs the corner table with *Total Film*. The man who once arrived from the future to save Sarah Connor from Arnold Schwarzenegger's rampaging T-800 cyborg has arrived wearing a suit and tie (he's off to a meeting with a high-powered manager he's hoping will take him on). Tall, and with a rough-hewn, worn-in appearance, he's still clearly fit and, ordering a Diet Coke, leans back to recollect his experiences making the film that propelled Schwarzenegger to superstardom and Biehn to a working-stiff's career, for a long time as one of James Cameron's go-to thespians. Not that he's complaining... The 52-year-old actor is fully aware that when most people hear his name mentioned, the role that leaps to mind is *Terminator*. It's been still most impressed with *The Terminator*. It's been 26, 27 years, but throughout the years, it's the film I usually get recognised for. I didn't know it was such a big role at the time. But I had a lot of fun making it. Jim's a very smart guy and it's been a great thrill in my life to have his friendship..."

A DREAM START

Anyone remotely familiar with *Terminator* lore will know about its fever-dream origins. Cameron, confined to his Rome hotel room with a stomach virus during post-production on *Piranha II: The Spawning*, laid on his bed, having bizarre visions of a robotic endoskeleton emerging phoenix-like from an inferno. "He called me from Rome and said that this incredible iconic keyframe had come to him and that we should develop a story containing that image," recalls Gale Anne Hurd, the woman who would embark on an incredible journey with Cameron.

WORDS MATT MUELLER



creative control. In fact, in post-production, [*Hemdale chief*] John Daly came in to the editing room and tried to re-edit the film.”

REALISING A FANTASY

But first things first... To play the “anonymous, saturnine figure” envisioned in his script, Cameron considered Jurgen Prochnow, Lance Henriksen – but never an Austrian muscleman with his own fever-dreams (of humonculous movie stardom). In need of a bigger name, Cameron and Hurd found themselves reluctantly meeting Arnold Schwarzenegger over lunch, ostensibly to discuss the part of Kyle Reese. By the end, all concerned say it was clear Arnie was going to play the implacable death machine. It’s what the then-36-year-old muscleman had wanted all along, but he accepted the role against the advice of friends who felt a villain wasn’t the right career move.

Biehn wasn’t initially impressed either. “Arnold was not a movie star,” he points out. “He’d been Conan and he wasn’t somebody who was extremely well-respected. So starring in a science-fiction movie with Arnold and a director who’d made a movie for Roger Corman and got fired and it was the story of a robot who comes back from the future... it all sounded pretty ridiculous. But I met Jim and he seemed like a serious, smart guy. So I took a chance.”

The original plan to shoot in the summer of 1983 in Toronto was scuppered when Dino De Laurentiis

recalled Schwarzenegger for the Conan sequel. So they switched to March 1984 in California, shooting in some of the nastiest parts of downtown L.A. Hurd recalls turning into alleyways on location hunts with Cameron and their headlights finding “20 or 30 pairs of eyes, not all of them rats”.

Schwarzenegger’s first day encompassed the scene driving through the parking lot searching for Sarah and Reese. He and Cameron discussed the character’s shark-like approach, eyes scanning back and forth, searching relentlessly for its prey – minimum movement, no wasted energy. “It took on a larger-than-life sheen,” says Cameron. “I found myself on set doing things I didn’t think I’d do – scenes that were supposed to be purely horrific just couldn’t be, because they were now too flamboyant with Arnold.”

Biehn and Hamilton brought vulnerability and depth to the love story – as well as the ability to spin exposition while on the run, dodging bullets. It made for a tough shoot. “Jim doesn’t coddle actors,” states Biehn. “He doesn’t treat them like they’re anything special, and there were times that Linda fought back with him. They had more of a volatile relationship, and always have, than Jim and I. I could do a take and Jim would say, ‘That’s exactly how I don’t want it.’ I’m OK with that, but she was more sensitive.”

If Cameron and Hamilton clashed, in Hurd’s words, Cameron “mind-melded” with Stan Winston

on the shoot. But performance issues with the effects maestro’s full-size mechanical robot – taken directly from Cameron’s own concept sketches – lead to grinding delays. Winston’s team were putting the finishing touches on the set the day Cameron needed it to shoot. The delay meant six weeks chopped off the stop-motion schedule, giving effects outfit Fantasy II no time to test movements. (Hence, the herky-jerky nature of the final figure.) Looking back, the Schwarzenegger puppet in the infamous eye-plucking sequence appears rubbery and unnatural, while the scorched-earth future looks like humanity is being attacked by Airfix models (not far off the truth – *Terminator*’s hovering Hunter-Killers were all miniatures). But in the context of era and budget, they were stunning achievements.

“We’d have one night to shoot an action sequence and whatever we got that night is what ended up in the film,” recalls Hurd of their truncated shooting schedule. “Necessity became the mother of creative invention.”

By the end, Cameron was going out and “stealing” shots. He surreptitiously held the camera while Schwarzenegger crossed the street and punched in the car window before the police came. The guerrilla mood infected everyone. To create the iconic Terminator “clank”, composer Brad Fiedel bashed a hammer against a cast-iron frying pan and recorded it with a dodgy microphone. Fiedel, who was warned against

Hard talk: (left to right) Arnie as the T-800, Michael Biehn and Linda Hamilton hide, that infamous polaroid photo, the T-800 in action



‘ARNOLD WAS NOT A MOVIE STAR. HE WASN’T SOMEBODY EXTREMELY WELL-RESPECTED... IT ALL SOUNDED PRETTY RIDICULOUS’

MICHAEL BIEHN

taking the job by his agent (“Hemdale had a bad reputation for not paying people”), created a score rife with gloomy, percussive thumps and whirring synthesisers. “I had the film throbbing inside me at a gut level – da-da-dum-da-dum. I don’t know where that came from. That was the way my solar plexus felt about the Terminator.” When he played a demo, Cameron gushed, “That’s the movie.”


Relations with Hemdale started thorny and stayed that way. Daly wanted to slash costs by ending the film after the Terminator had been blown up in the truck – “before the image that inspired the movie, the endoskeleton emerging from the flames!” says Hurd, aghast. Three days before the start date, Hemdale execs had asked what planet the Terminator came from “so I guess it’s not too surprising what happened”. She says it was quickly obvious that *Terminator* was going to turn out “even better than I had dared to hope. That’s why, when there was discussion about not completing the visual effects, it was a surprise. But the good news is we had incredible support.” When Hemdale tried to take over the film, the completion-bond firm – who assumed control at that stage – stood firm behind Cameron and Hurd.

AN INSTANT SUCCESS

The Terminator opened in the US on 31 October 1984. Orion, its domestic distributor, frontloaded their ad spend, anticipating a quick splash

followed by the traditional B-movie nosedive. But executed with flair, precision and intelligence, *The Terminator* touched a cultural nerve. It stayed in cinemas for weeks and muscled its way onto several critics’ year-end Top 10 lists.

“The Terminator represented the dark side of human psyche – that fantasy of being totally stripped of all moral constraints and being able to do exactly what they wanted to do whenever they wanted to do it,” observed Cameron. “It’s the little chittering demon inside all of us.” Cameron and Hurd had proved their doubters wrong, who whispered that the duo would be forced to patch together a Franken-film in post-production. Later, Cameron would declare himself “75 per cent” satisfied with the film. As for Hurd, “I recently looked at it again and I’m thrilled with it. There’s some terrific sequences and it’s poignant. Do I wish we’d had those extra days? Do I wish we’d had more money? Absolutely. But considering the hand that we were dealt, I can’t complain. And I’m just glad that we stood up for ourselves and didn’t give in.”

They gave in, though, when sci-fi author Harlan Ellison threatened to sue for copyright infringement, claiming *The Terminator* ripped off his 1964 *Outer Limits* episodes ‘Soldier’ and ‘Demon With A Glass Hand’. Despite Cameron’s objections, they were forced to instate the credit, “Acknowledgement to the works of Harlan Ellison” on the film. 





25 REASONS TO LOVE THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

THIS IS THE SEQUEL YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...

WORDS JOSH WINNING

There is no try," Yoda memorably uttered in *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back*, and when it came to creating a follow-up to 1977's *Star Wars*, it's fair to say George Lucas well and truly took the little green fella's advice. Going on to become the third highest-grossing film of the 1980s, *The Empire Strikes Back* remains a sci-fi juggernaut. Here are 25 things that made us fall in love with a galaxy far, far away all over again...

25 "I'M NOT AFRAID"

Luke is young and brave, telling Yoda that he's unafraid to become a Jedi and fight. Yoda's ominous reply is chilling: "You will be. You will be."

24 "THEY'RE MOVING INTO ATTACK POSITION"

Cornered by the Star Destroyer and with hyperdrive still on the fritz, Han Solo comes up with a crackpot scheme to avoid his pursuers once more – by flying right at the Destroyer and damn near clipping them on the windscreen as he whips by. Smooth.

23 THE HOWLING

Han and Luke are both missing in the blizzards of Hoth, but the Rebel base needs to be shut down as the weather worsens. As the massive doors slam closed, Leia looks on with troubled eyes, and Chewie lets out a heart-rending howl.



22 "NERF HERDER!"

Insults in the *Star Wars* universe don't make much sense in our system, but as takedowns go, Leia's is one of the most quotable: "Why, you stuck up, half-witted, scruffy-looking Nerf herder!" To which, naturally, Han replies: "Who's scruffy-looking?"

21 "THANK YOU"

Princess Leia finally does what we've all been wanting to do the entire movie – she switches C-3PO off. After the tin bucket reprimands Han for "going too far this time" and hiding the Falcon on the Star Destroyer, Leia shuts the irritating 'bot down. Even Han's grateful.

20 CHEWIE WELDING

Not only Chewie welding, but Chewie using his protective eye goggles like monocles, which makes him look sort of like a very hairy Tom Cruise. Alright, not really, but it's still cool.

19 CLOUD CITY

Straight out of a fairytale but given a future tech-y sheen, Cloud City is the kind of wonderland we'd love to visit on holiday. Han Solo and co are met there by Lando, who pretends to be angry with Han. "You got a lot of guts coming here after what you pulled," he spits. Han offers his best innocent look, then reacts as Lando leaps at him – for a hug. This is also where we discover the Falcon used to be Lando's, which is a neat little detail.

18 THE EMPEROR

In one of the trilogy's "aha!" moments, Darth Vader kneels in front of

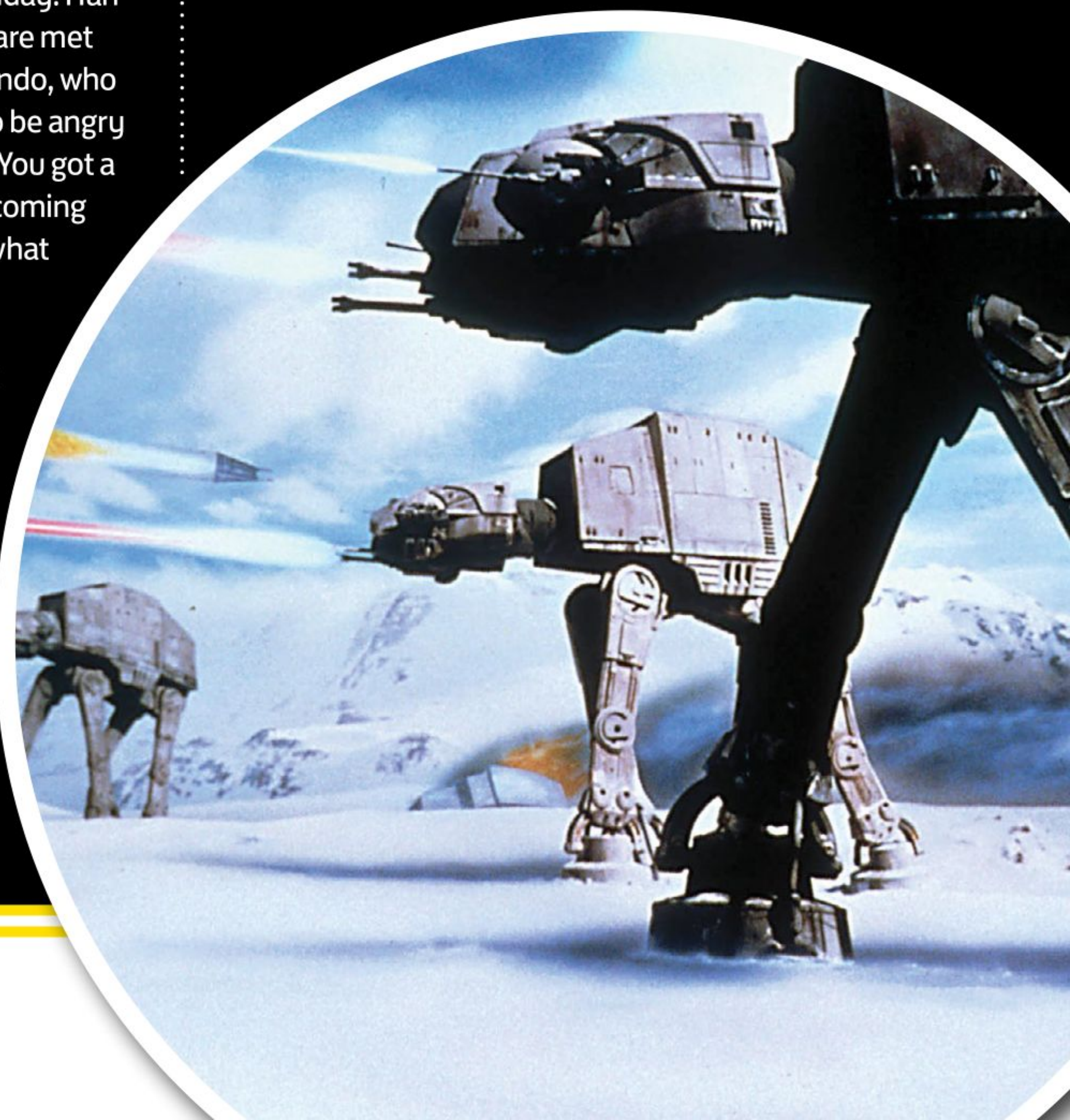
a guy called The Emperor. A hooded menace right out of our nightmares, it's not hard to be terrified by this new power, especially as Vader's bowing to him...

17 HELMET TIME

We get our first glimpse of Darth Vader sans helmet in *Empire*, as a back view of the villain's skull reveals he's horribly scarred. Luckily we don't see it for long – his helmet's lowered onto his head pretty sharpish.

16 "NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS"

In the Falcon driving seat, Han Solo finds he can't use hyperdrive, while trying to evade Imperial forces. He gets out of it by flying straight into an asteroid field and demonstrating simply insane piloting skills as he dodges the floating debris. Speaking of madness, Han also uses a lightsaber for the first and only time in *Empire Strikes Back*, cutting open a Tauntaun to put Luke inside.



15 "APOLOGY ACCEPTED"

Captain Needa surrenders himself as responsible for the Star Destroyer's inability to capture the Millennium Falcon. "Apology accepted," quips Vader after psychically strangling the wretched captain. It's not the first time he's exercised the dark side of the Force, either. Earlier, Vader shows what a Sith Lord can really do by strangling the admiral via video link, then promoting the general even as his predecessor collapses behind him. "You have failed me for the last time, Admiral," he growls. Damn.

14 BOBA FETT

Quite frankly the coolest bounty hunter in the universe. He's a man of few words, but that's Fett's strength—he's entirely focussed on the task at hand. He's also the guy who tracks Han to Cloud City and puts a stop to his wild goose chase through the stars. Just don't talk to us about what happens to him in *Return Of The Jedi*.

13 THAT'S A WRAP

Where *A New Hope* ends on a jubilant high, *Empire's* end credits roll just as things are at their bleakest. Sure, everybody's alive (just), but Luke's got a mechanical hand and Han Solo's been frozen in carbonite and shipped off to Jabba the Hutt's pad, providing one heck of a cliffhanger.

12 UP AND AWAY

"Do or do not, there is no try," says Yoda, shortly before demonstrating what the Force is really capable of by levitating Luke's X-Wing out of the swamp. It's the first time we've seen the Force being used for something big, and leads to Luke exclaiming, "I don't believe it." Yoda's catty reply? "That is why you fail."

11 BEN'S BACK

Obi-Wan may have been killed in *A New Hope*, but that doesn't stop his spirit returning to nudge Luke in the right direction. He makes the first of a handful of enigmatic appearances as Luke lies in the Hoth snow having just escaped the wampa. It's Ben who tells Luke to go to Yoda. Meanwhile, he shows up on Dagobah as Luke jets off to Cloud City. "That boy is our last hope," he intones. "No, there is another," replies Yoda in a bit of ominous foreshadowing. Would the pair really have trained Leia if Luke had died or was lost to the dark side? Sadly we never find out.

10 AT-ATs

Ben Burt's sound design gives these massive land-striders a real sense of power. Meanwhile, they wreak destruction on the Hoth-based Rebels even as Luke and his fighter pilots attempt to take them down. It'll take a lot of cunning to bring these guys to their knees...

9 "LAUGH IT UP, FUZZBALL!"

Han doesn't appreciate being made a laughing stock of when Leia rebukes his claims that she's the reason he has to stay with them on Hoth. Chewie laughs at his co-pilot, prompting the quotable outburst.

8 HAN SOLO

Was there ever a hero as cool as Han Solo? Sure, some have come close, but when it comes to arrogant charm and sarcastic one-liners (not to mention lunatic schemes), Solo's hard to beat. As Leia notes: "You have your moments. Not many of them, but you do have them." Ahhh.

7 BATTLE OF HOTH

Empire opens with a bang as Imperial forces crack down on the Rebels on Hoth, sending out their stampeding AT-ATs. It's a show-stopper involving some seriously clever battle tactics—in particular Luke using his lightsaber to crack open the underbelly of one AT-AT to chuck a bomb inside. Now that's thinking with your head. And then there's the Hoth base. You'd never suspect that behind all that Hothian snow lies a fully active Rebel base. Which, of course, is the whole point. With giant Perspex maps, computers and star ships all crammed under the ice, it's a snug, busy warren of activity. We can't get enough of it.

6 I'M FREEZING

Empire reaches new dark depths as Han is frozen in carbonite by Darth Vader. When that slab of carbon slams down on the floor, revealing Han's frozen image, it's nothing short of chilling.

5 SABRE DUEL

Luke and Vader clash for the very first time. This is the only lightsaber fight in *Empire* and it has real impact, especially as the last time Vader fought somebody, it was Obi-Wan—which didn't exactly end well.

4 DIRECT DARKNESS

Empire is easily the darkest film in the whole saga, but while writers Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan took the *Wars*-verse into thematically bleak terrain, it was director Irvin Kershner who matched their script with luscious visuals. He gives the first *Star Wars* sequel a chilly sheen in places and a gritty realism in others (see Dagobah). Hats off to the man.

3 INTRODUCING YODA

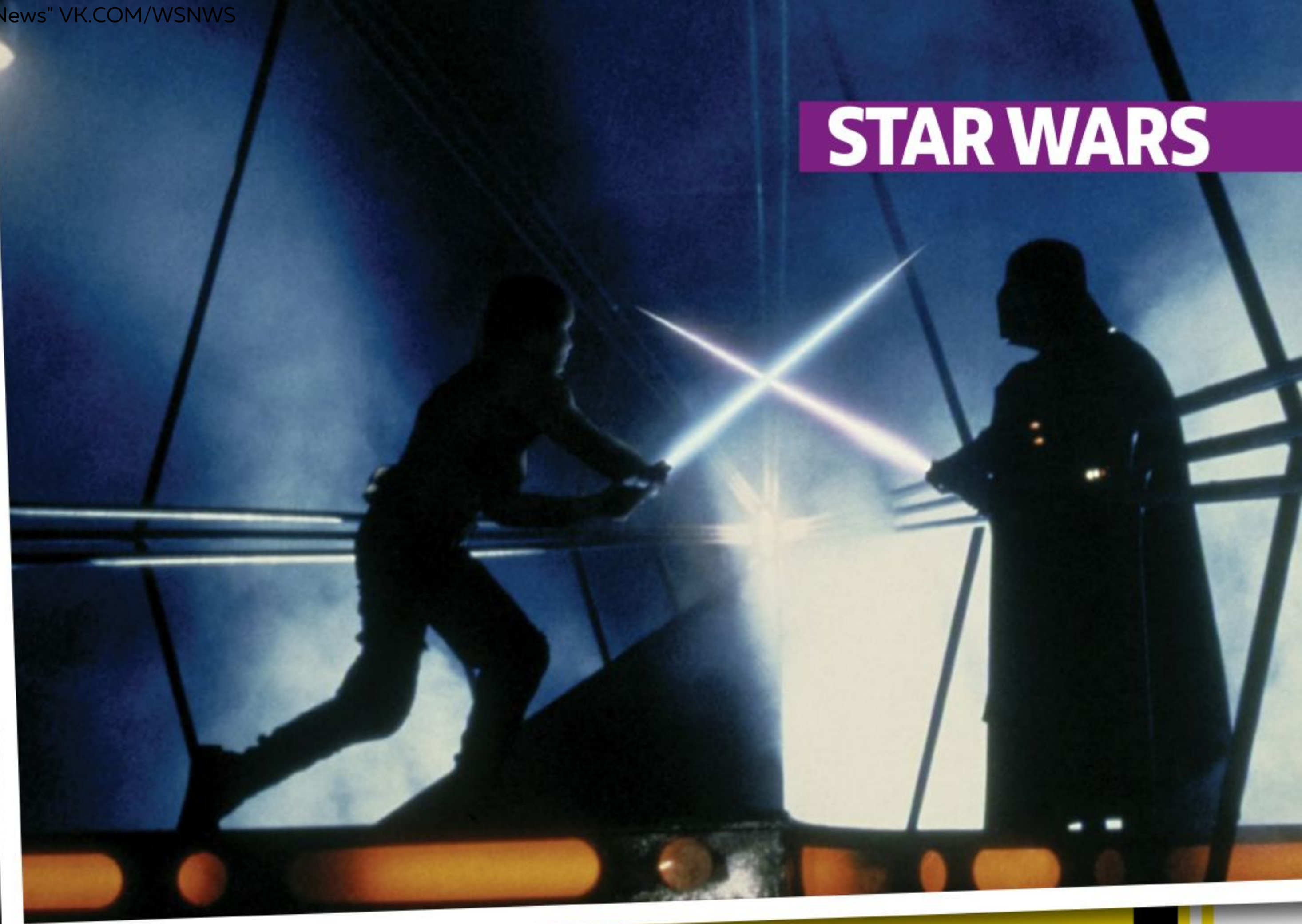
"Looking? Found someone you have, I'd say," titters Yoda as Luke first encounters the little green man. It's a brilliantly played intro as Yoda goes from babbling baboon (rooting through Luke's possessions etc) to wise old man. Size matters not, indeed.

2 "I LOVE YOU"

Before Han is frozen in carbonite, Leia breathlessly declares her love for him. Ever the scoundrel, Han's reply is characteristically off-hand: "I know." Classic—and entirely improvised.

1 "I AM YOUR FATHER"

Empire comes to its emotional climax, delivering this sucker punch twist that remains one of the biggest "Whaaaaaa?" moments in the history of cinema. Luke's anguished "Noooo!" still gives us shivers. And a franchise is officially born. 🤖





SCI-FI & FANTASY

ROBOCOP

ITS PRIME DIRECTIVE WAS TO THRILL AND KILL – AND BOY DID THIS ICONIC SCI-FI DO JUST THAT...

WORDS **BEN WILSON**

Brush with the law: (below left) Ronny Cox presents ED-209; (below right) Weller in full costume

FROM THE ARCHIVES
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 2015

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1987

DIRECTOR Paul Verhoeven

SCREENPLAY Edward Neumeier, Michael Miner

CAST Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, Dan O'Herlihy, Ronny Cox

BUDGET \$13m

BOX OFFICE \$53.4m

RUNNING TIME 101 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Orion Pictures

TAGLINE "Part man. Part machine. All cop. The future of law enforcement."

RELEASE DATE 17 July 1987

Dutch director Paul Verhoeven, a Hollywood newcomer in the mid-'80s, infamously dragged his cast and crew through so much stress, indecision, bad planning, and explosive tantrum-throwing that if *RoboCop* had failed to triumph, he would never have been let on a film set again. And yet the signs that this was going to be a tortuous production were there from the very beginning.

It's spring 1985, and from the moment Verhoeven reads the third draft of the *RoboCop* script from Orion, he hates it. Disgusted by the very idea of a police officer being resurrected as a crime-fighting robot by a money-grabbing corporation, he throws on a beach towel and phones the studio to tell them he won't do it. But while he frolics in the sea, his wife reads it and later advises he should make it. "And my wife's a clever girl," says Verhoeven.

Two days later, armed with a Dutch-to-English dictionary to navigate the American terms, Verhoeven sees what his wife is saying. He agrees to move to LA for a year to shoot *RoboCop* for \$13m, but not without asking writers Ed Neumeier and Michael Miner to restructure their screenplay.

Verhoeven's initial reluctance was the first blunder of many. "It took me two months to realise that we even had to start working on the RoboCop costume!" he recalls. "I'd been so busy with scripting and staffing that I'd neglected one of the film's most important things."

In something of a panic, Verhoeven now took his core crew members, the writers and suit designer Rob Bottin (the genius behind the ferocious ET in John Carpenter's *The Thing*) on a wild goose chase over what RoboCop himself should look like, with the director to-ing and fro-ing between whether to make his metal protagonist more akin to the robot in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* or a big, boxy Japanese droid. He finally settled for the former, but at a huge cost to everyone's effort and time.

To add further stress, Orion was pressuring Verhoeven to cast Arnold Schwarzenegger in the lead role. "I said, 'No.' Arnold in that suit would have been too bulky. It would have looked silly."

Instead, Verhoeven cast virtual unknown Peter Weller in the lead role. Why? Simply because he had a good jawline. "It was the right thing to do," maintains Verhoeven. "An actor with a weaker chin would have ruined the whole feel of the movie."

At first Weller wasn't sure he even wanted the role. "When I heard the title, I went, 'Hmm,'" he says. "But 18 months before, I'd written a life-plan of five directors I wanted to work with and Paul was number three, so I said, 'Yes.'"

Weller would soon question his decision. "Paul was very different from how I thought he would

be," he sighs. "He was a megalomaniac, and very demanding." Moreover, two weeks into production, the suit still wasn't ready, meaning Weller had no time to practice walking in it. He'd spent seven months back home in New York perfecting his Robo-stride with celebrated mime artist Moni Yakim. But when the suit finally arrived, its bulkiness prevented him from executing the fluid, snake-like movements he'd envisaged, and production then had to be shut down for a day so Weller could work on a more staccato strut.

The incident left the actor fuming inside the iconic suit. "After that crisis, Peter turned into a very difficult person," says Verhoeven. "But when he then became obstructive, I got pissed off with him."

The animosity with Weller wasn't the only source of Verhoeven's mounting blood pressure. "This being his first big Hollywood movie," says

Yakim, "Paul was very tense – he wanted to succeed.

And when things didn't go to plan, he got very upset."

Part of this stress was understandable, insists Ronny Cox, whose power-hungry character Dick Jones – OCP's senior president – tries to eradicate RoboCop by unleashing his rival droid ED-209. "At three points during filming, the studio was contemplating pulling the plug as the money people were losing their faith in the production," he recalls.

Verhoeven was thus forced to go in front of the moneymen and resell his movie based on canned footage he'd shot so far. He succeeded, but now concedes he was terrified. "Science-fiction was a big step for me back then," he concedes, admitting he became obsessed with *The Terminator* and watched it 20 times to teach himself to shoot sci-fi with attitude.

One thing's for sure: Verhoeven, on set, was primed to explode, his inexperience tested by hovering suits and a stropky lead star. "Paul would yell and scream," nods Kurtwood Smith, who plays Clarence Boddicker, the movie's 'Himmler glasses'-wearing crime boss. Cox agrees: "Paul is known for his volatile temper. He can be hard to work with."

Cox adds that Verhoeven would frequently walk off set to calm down. Yakim, meanwhile, remembers him throwing himself to the ground and screaming. "'You're fucking with me! We need more firepower, bigger explosions! Where is it? You're killing me!'" he quotes.

Things didn't get easier, either. Playing the ambitious exec heading the RoboCop project, actor Miguel Ferrer recalls how Weller began to insist everyone talk to him as if he really were RoboCop. Ferrer found it amusing; Verhoeven most certainly did not. "It was too over the top!" he says, voice rising. Adds Smith: "It was like 'Hi RoboCop!' when all you're trying to do is ask him to move away from the toaster so you can make a bagel. So everyone began avoiding him."

The act of getting Weller into the RoboCop suit further isolated him, says Nancy Allen, who plays Murphy's partner. "It took about 10 hours to screw Peter into that outfit every day." Make-up was no breeze, either, with Weller spending eight hours every morning in the make-up chair, arriving on set for 2.30am, so he'd be wearing his full war paint when the rest of the cast rolled in mid-morning. And by that point, in the boiling Dallas heat, even the cast and crew wearing just T-shirts and shorts were feeling distinctly uncomfortable.

Thankfully, by this stage, Verhoeven had mellowed. "When my editor showed me some of the scenes we'd filmed, I was flabbergasted. It had taken me a long time to believe in myself on the set of *RoboCop*. Now I couldn't believe I had made this film. I was going, 'Did I do that? Did I make this scene this well, with this level of playfulness?'"

From the moment Orion screened the final cut, audiences loved it. "We showed it for the first time in New York, and it was the most spine-tingling experience of my life," says Verhoeven. "When RoboCop is asked, 'What's your name, son?' the entire audience shouted out together, 'MURPHY!' It was amazing." 🎬

'ANGER IS THE ONLY WAY THAT PAUL CAN EXPRESS HIMSELF' KURTWOOD SMITH





FIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

The 1980s was the decade of action. Between Schwarzenegger, Stallone and co, it was the era of the 'star as hero'...

WORDS **JOSH WINNING**

“feel the need... the need for speed!” chorused Tom Cruise and co in 1986's *Top Gun*, and although they were chanting about fighter jets, they might as well have been cheering on the adrenaline-pumped action flicks of the 1980s, which were similarly loaded with wowsome set-pieces, muscular performances and, yes, stuff that went fast.

In a decade when CGI was still a twinkle in George Lucas's eye and a movie star lived in the White House, the 1980s saw Hollywood birthing some of its most innovative, optimistic and enduring action films. With its big names and even bigger stunts, this was the era of 'heroes as franchise'. Rambo. Indiana Jones. The Beverly Hills Cop. When The Terminator promised “I'll be back”, he spoke not just for Arnold Schwarzenegger, but also the actor's big-necked stablemates, who were happy to keep up with growing fan demand for kinetic kicks. Sylvester Stallone was the hardest working, starring in ten of the decade's action films. Schwarzenegger was close behind with seven. Kurt Russell made four; Mel Gibson five; Harrison Ford three.

It was a decade that dined out on what had gone before. “My generation found you had to use the old genres in new ways, pull them inside out,” recalls director Walter Hill, whose '70s output (*The Streetfighter*, *The Warriors*) placed him at the forefront of the '80s action movement. On top of producing *Aliens*, he directed *Red Heat*, *Extreme*

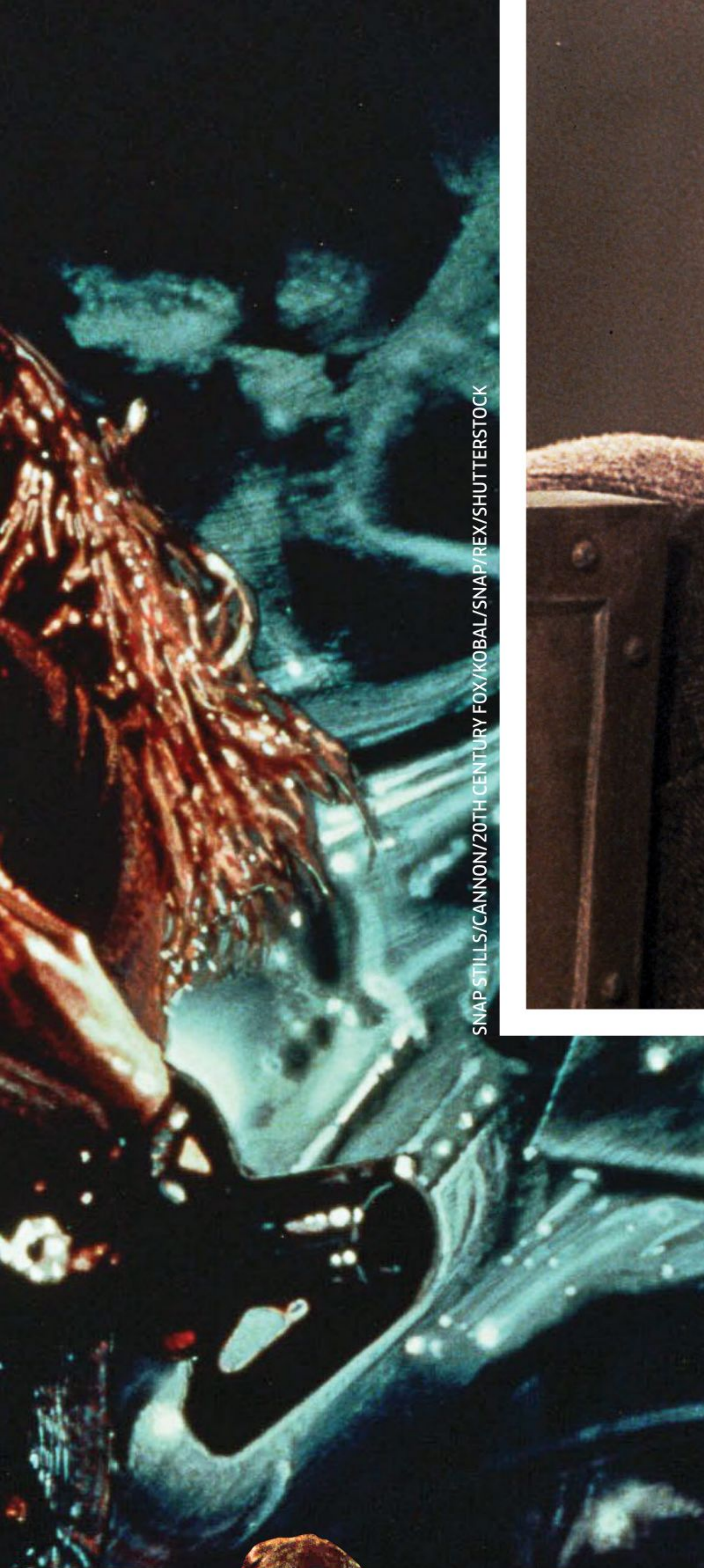


FIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

SNAP STILL/STILLS/CANNON/20TH CENTURY FOX/KOBAL/SNAP/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Action satisfaction: (clockwise from top left) action heroine Sigourney Weaver, Eddie Murphy makes an impressive debut, Jean-Claude Van Damme strikes a pose, Chuck Norris in action



Prejudice and *Johnny Handsome*, but his biggest contribution was introducing Eddie Murphy's wisecracking crim-turned-detective in *48 Hrs.*

A decade or so before 'diversity' became a show-buzz word, Murphy evolved into one of the decade's biggest stars, barrelling onto the scene with a dizzyingly confident debut in *48 Hrs.* Starring opposite Nick Nolte's hangdog detective, he put his Saturday Night Live experience to excellent use, stealing scenes left, right and centre as the snarky criminal roped in to help with a case.

"I'm the first black actor to take charge in a white world onscreen," Murphy said in 2011. "That's why I became as popular as I became. People had never seen that before." His popularity only grew over the course of the decade, particularly when *Beverly Hills Cop* hit in 1984, birthing a franchise that was still (just) alive in 2013 when Barry Sonnenfeld directed a one-off TV spin-off movie.

Perhaps because of the often ludicrous nature of '80s action cinema, comedy was a big part of its DNA. Quips, wisecracks and one-liners proliferated, and the action genre was quickly absorbed and borrowed from by other genres. John Carpenter – himself a '70s action auteur – translated it into sci-fi with *Escape From New York* and *They Live*, while Spielberg gave us action adventure with *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. Even apocalyptic thrillers like *Mad Max 2* took a bite of the action apple.

The best action films said something about the masculinity on show. While Gibson's Martin Riggs in *Lethal Weapon* is a man broken by grief, and *The Terminator* is a parody of a man, *Die Hard* featured arguably the most interesting hero: Bruce Willis' everyman cop John McClane, who really can't be bothered with fighting, and only does so to save his family. Lean, barefoot, quippy, he's the most relatable of all the '80s heroes because he feels real.

Even more pioneering was Ellen Ripley's transformation into a kickass Marine in *Aliens*. "The idea of a female at the centre of the action,

especially a reluctant one," remembers producer Gale Anne Hurd, "was a way to sort of have an everywoman character, someone not only women but men could relate to as well." Action heroines remained few, though. Sarah Connor didn't become a warrior until the '90s, and *Red Sonja* was too sexualised to be taken seriously (and bombed). It's a problem that Hollywood is still struggling with, despite rare hits like *Wonder Woman* and *Salt*.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about '80s action cinema is the way it cannibalised everything that had gone before. The '40s and '50s were typified by Hitchcock's gift for sizzling set-pieces. The '60s gave us James Bond, while the '70s delivered grit-and-gruel detectives who weren't shy of a skirmish – among them, Eastwood's 'Dirty'

Harry Callahan, Hackman's 'Popeye' Doyle and McQueen's Frank Bullitt. The '80s perfected the formula by turning actors into brands. Now, the most important names were the ones above the title (and it wasn't the director's).

Equally influential were the martial arts movies of the '70s, which introduced western audiences to fight choreography via Bruce Lee's *Enter The Dragon* and the *Street Fighter* series. These films not only became a huge hit with black audiences starved of non-white narratives, they also introduced a cinematic language for action that was taken up by Chuck Norris and Jean-Claude Van Damme.

"An action film can have too much action; picture an equaliser on a stereo, with all the knobs pegged at 10," argued Shane Black, the writer of *Lethal Weapon*. When filmmakers like Spielberg, Cameron, Stone and Hill got it right, though, they delivered spectacle and heart on a grand scale. The 1980s started with action comedies like *The Blues Brothers*, *Any Which Way You Can*, *The Cannonball Run*, but by the end, they had turned heroes into household names and established franchises that would survive for decades. In other words: long live the '80s. 🍿

These films not only became a huge hit with black audiences starved of non-white narratives, they also introduced a cinematic language for action that was taken up by Chuck Norris and Jean-Claude Van Damme.

"THEY TURNED HEROES INTO HOUSEHOLD NAMES AND ESTABLISHED FRANCHISES THAT WOULD LAST FOR DECADES"



CLASH TIT

CONAN VS ROCKY. THE TERMINATOR VS RAMBO. NOW THOSE ARE SCRAPS WE'D LIKE TO SEE, IF ONLY TO FIND OUT WHO WAS THE BETTER '80s ACTION STAR...

WORDS CERI THOMAS

Arnold Schwarzenegger told a friend back in 1977, "I'm going to be bigger than Sylvester Stallone." It must have been all his buddy could do not to laugh. In the dying years of the '70s, Stallone was one of the biggest stars in the world, with two hit *Rocky* movies and a handful of Oscar nominations to his name (the first Balboa outing made him only the third man, after Charlie Chaplin and Orson Welles, to pick up nominations for Best Screenplay and Best Actor in the same year). And Arnie?

He was just a former body builder with a handful of schlocky movie cameos and a weightlifting documentary named *Pumping Iron* on his CV. He was going nowhere fast.

Then came the '80s... The first hint that Schwarzenegger might have a future in the movie biz came in 1982 with the release of *Conan The Barbarian*. Plans for a *Conan*

VITAL STATS

NAME Arnold Alois Schwarzenegger

BORN 30 July 1947

HEIGHT 6' 2"

NUMBER OF '80s FILMS 10

BIGGEST HIT *Twins* (US gross: \$112m)

BIGGEST FLOP *Red Sonja* (US gross: \$6.9m)

COMICAL CHARACTER

NAME Captain Ivan Danko (*Red Heat*)

CATCHPHRASE "I'll be back!" (*The Terminator*)

BEST ZINGER To a guy he's just nailed to a wall with a knife: "Stick around!" (*Predator*)

O F T H E A N S

movie had been kicking around since the mid-'70s, but it finally went in front of the cameras in 1981. Director John Milius eked a performance of grunting majesty out of Arnie, chopping his dialogue back to the bare minimum (even after extensive voice training, half of what he said was still lost in an Austrian accent as thick as his biceps), and the testosterone-ridden epic cruised to a respectable \$38 million in the US when it opened in 1982.

This was nothing compared to Stallone's \$125 million haul for *Rocky III*, which slugged into cinemas a fortnight after respectably enough to make Arnold optimistic about the future. That optimism was slightly misplaced, though. If Arnie thought *Conan* would morph into a Bond-like string of sequels, it was a notion destroyed by the lacklustre performance of the 1984 sequel, *Conan The Destroyer*. Crawling to \$26.4 million, it was the nail in Conan's coffin. Arnie had made a name for himself, but now he needed to find a new signature role.

Stallone, meanwhile, had already found his. John Rambo made his first screen appearance in 1982's *First Blood*. Originally, the sulky special forces veteran who brings the high-intensity warfare of Vietnam to a small town in the Rockies was supposed to die at the end of the movie (as happens in David Morrell's original, left-wing action novel), but test audiences found this depressing (go figure...) so he was allowed to live. Just as well: *First Blood* went on to equal *Rocky III*'s take of \$125 million. Sequels were only a matter of time. Suddenly Stallone had two hugely successful franchises ticking along. >>

VITAL STATS

NAME Sylvester Gardenzio Stallone

BORN 6 July 1946

HEIGHT 5'10"

NUMBER OF '80S FILMS 13

BIGGEST HIT *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (US gross: \$150m)

BIGGEST FLOP *Escape To Victory* (US gross: \$10.8m)

COMICAL CHARACTER

NAME Marion 'Cobra' Cobretti (*Cobra*)

CATCHPHRASE "Adriaaaaaannn!" (Any *Rocky* movie)

BEST ZINGER "Rambo? Rambo's a pussy." (*Tango & Cash*)



ACTION



'WE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF WALL-TO-WALL ACTION THE MOMENT THE MOVIE STARTS TO PLAY' Schwarzenegger

Arnie's dreams of surpassing him, meanwhile, seemed just that. With Conan destroyed, he had no choice but to accept a part in a low-budget sci-fi flick. "It's some shit movie I'm doing," he told a journalist. "Take a couple of weeks..." That movie was *The Terminator*. It was the making of Arnie, giving him a signature role, a catchphrase – "I'll be back!" – and, best of all, a box-office hit. When it opened in 1984, *The Terminator* took \$38 million in the US, adding another \$40 million overseas. Arnie was getting big.

But the first half of the decade was just the warm up. The second half of the '80s was the main event in the Sly vs Arnie clash. By the end of 1985, Schwarzenegger and Stallone had gone head-to-head in four movies, Sly's *Rambo: First Blood Part II* and *Rocky IV* facing off against Arnie's *Red Sonja* and *Commando*. In box-office terms, Sly walked it, his efforts pocketing more than four times what Schwarzenegger's managed. He could also lay claim to having a film that helped mould US foreign policy. *Rambo II* rewrote American history, allowing Stallone to return to Vietnam as the guerrilla fighter and defeat the superior (and let's not forget, communist) Vietnamese army. Total rubbish, but America loved it, and so did Ronald Reagan. The Republican President announced that next time terrorists took US citizens hostage, the administration would "know what to do".

But the Austrian Oak wasn't going to take any of this lying down. Indeed, when it came to the war

of words, he'd gained the upper fist. "I'd be angry at hearing my name mentioned in the same breath as Stallone's" was the opening salvo from Arnold in a 1985 interview. "Stallone uses body doubles for some of the close-ups in his movies. I don't. One, my ego wouldn't let me. And two, I don't need a stand in because there's nobody around with a better body than mine."

It wasn't just bodies Arnie wanted to compare – he was prepared to compete with Sly when it came to body counts too. "We probably kill more people in *Commando* than Stallone did in *Rambo*," he continued. "The difference is that we don't pretend the violence is justified by patriotic pride. All that flag waving is a lot of bull..."

There were more than box-office receipts and slaughter-fests linking the two together in 1985, though. That was also the year that Sly got married to Arnie's *Red Sonja* co-star Brigitte Nielsen. Even though Schwarzenegger was already engaged to future-wife Maria Shriver, that didn't prevent rumours from cropping up during the shooting of the sword-and-sorcery flick that he and Nielsen were more than just good friends. It's doubtful anything ever happened between the two, but it still must have rankled Arnie to see his co-star taking up with his biggest professional rival.

"If you're doing 120-pound curls [*at the gym*], he'll say, 'I can do 130,'" he said at the time, levelling the charge that Stallone took himself too seriously. "He's obsessed

and that carries through in the way he dresses, how hard he tries to belong to a charity organisation. It's all Rocky, it doesn't come from, you know [*Arnold points to his heart*]. There's no love there and people see that. You can fake your way for a year, but for 10 years, that's hard. Eventually it catches up with you." Mee-oww!

The next few years didn't see Arnie's films become more successful. It was more that Stallone's popularity tailed off. There's not much to choose between Arnie's *Raw Deal*, *Predator* and *The Running Man*, and Sly's *Cobra* and *Over The Top* in terms of quality (with the exception of *Predator*) or box-office returns. But good luck just seemed to have deserted Stallone. He was just slightly off the beat while Schwarzenegger was bang on it.

Take 1988, for example. Stallone poured all his hopes into the third *Rambo* outing, which would pit the bandanna-wearing killer up against a bunch of evil Russian soldiers in Afghanistan. A dead cert, right? Except that before shooting had finished, the Russians announced they were pulling out of the country. *Rambo III* looked like a period piece before it even opened. By contrast, Schwarzenegger released *Red Heat* that year, a thriller about a Russian cop coming to America in pursuit of a killer. It was one of the first films to shoot on location in Red Square.

SCHWARZENEGGER VS STALLONE



‘THERE’S ENOUGH COMPETITION IN LIFE WITHOUT ONE ACTOR TRYING TO COMPETE AGAINST ANOTHER’ Stallone

Arnie and co were enjoying their first day of filming there when Mikhail Gorbachev announced the withdrawal from Afghanistan. It’s pretty much a dead cert that Stallone enjoyed that day considerably less.

With the huge weight of the franchise behind it, *Rambo III* still out-pointed *Red Heat* at the US box office, but it was almost the last time a Stallone vehicle made more money than any Arnie film. As the pair of beefed-up action men both started juggling comedy with action, Schwarzenegger’s box office started to soar. His last movie of the decade, 1989’s *Twins*, saw him record his first \$100 million movie, and in the ’90s he managed seven more films that surpassed that mark.

Stallone’s fortunes plummeted by comparison. He signed off the decade with *Tango & Cash* and *Lock Up* (both 1989). Even their combined gross didn’t challenge that of *Twins*, and Stallone wouldn’t appear in another movie that broke \$100 million until 2003 with *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over* – and that was as much in spite of, rather than because of, his supporting role as the villain.

For a snapshot of how things changed over the years, let’s compare sequels. In 1990, *Rocky V* (dunkytosh that sees a brain-damaged, penniless Rocky fighting a young pretender in the street) hardly managed to reach the \$41 million mark in the US. A year later, Arnie released *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* – directed by James Cameron and pushing the boundaries with its liquid-metal effects

work, it gobbled up five times as much as Sly’s toothless sequel, with a \$205 million haul. In the ’90s, after their public PR hatchet-burying via the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, Sylvester and Arnold took delight in sticking references to each other in their movies: a mention of President Schwarzenegger in 1993’s *Demolition Man* and a poster of Stallone as The Terminator in *Last Action Hero* that same year. You couldn’t see that happening a few years earlier, when Arnie was still slinging barbs at Sly. Stallone had tried to calm things down with a comment in 1987: “There’s enough competition in life without one actor trying so actively to compete against another. This kind of thing can only end in bitterness and unfortunately, there can never be any real winner.”

However, Schwarzenegger refused to call a truce. In 1988 he told *Playboy* magazine that image-wise, Stallone was a lost cause. “Listen, he hired the best publicity agents in the world and they couldn’t straighten out his act. There’s nothing anyone can do to save his ass and his image. Just the way he dresses. Seeing him dressed in his white suit, trying to look slick and hip – that really annoys people... It’s a shame no one taught him to be cool.” And again – mee-oww!

No wonder that when Stallone found a picture of Arnie hanging on the wall of a nightclub he was visiting, he demanded that it be removed immediately or he’d leave and never come back. The pic was

handed over to Sly’s minders, who destroyed it.

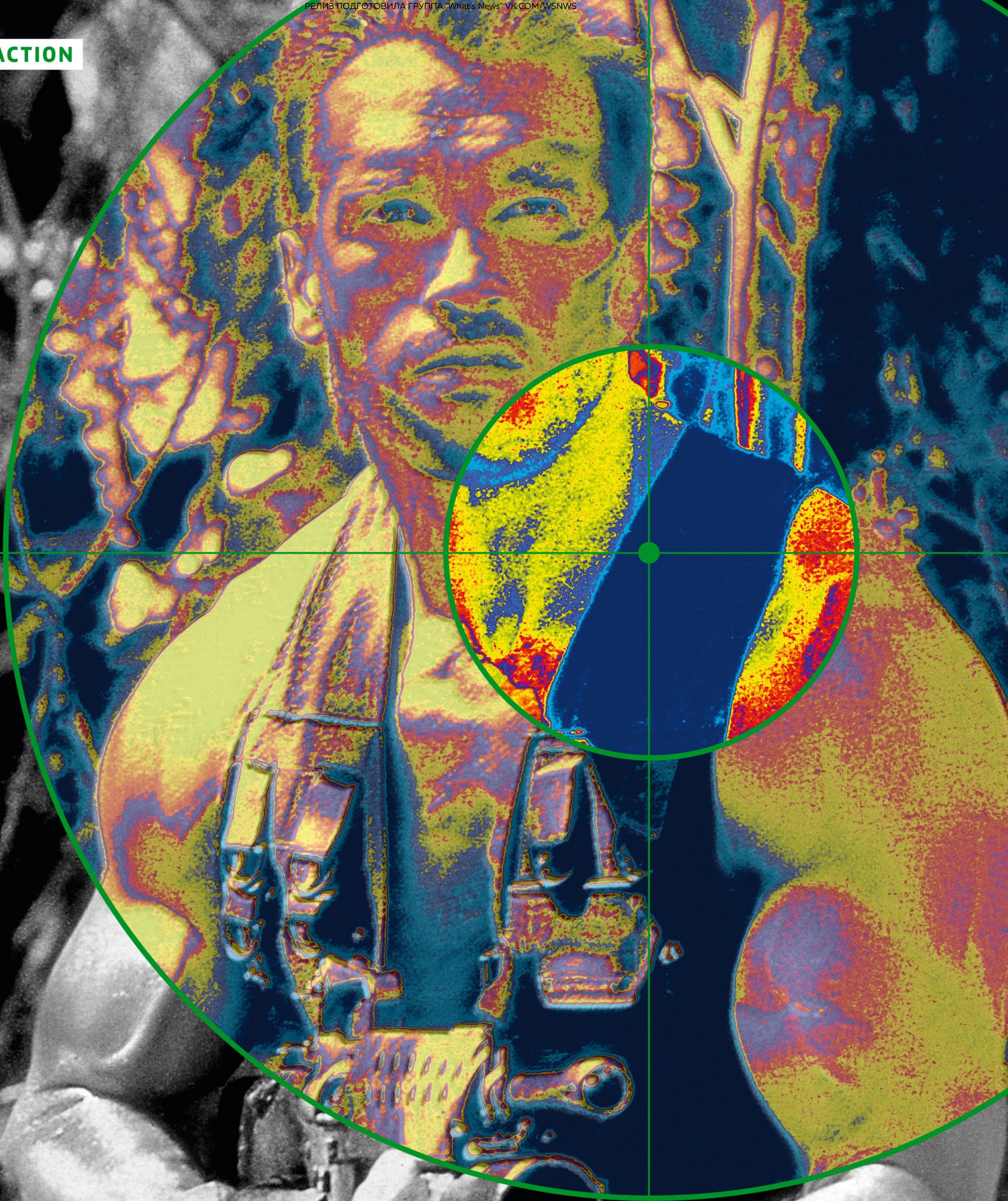
Whether shooting, shouting or squabbling, Stallone and Schwarzenegger were the biggest things in musclebound ’80s cinema by a mile. With Sly largely a spent force and Arnie focusing more and more on his political career, ’90s action movies lacked that certain overblown something. But it’s a something that was rediscovered in the Noughties when the action titans finally put their differences aside for the second two *Expendables* movies.

“We’re in love with each other,” Schwarzenegger joked in 2012, in a somewhat surprising about turn that saw the ex-Governator make a cameo in *Expendables 2* before starring opposite Stallone in *Expendables 3*. In fact, the pair had so much fun, they got together again for *Escape Plan* (2013) playing inmates at a high security prison who team up to break out.

Now, they’re happy to share credit for the ’80s action flicks that once made them mortal enemies. “We came up with the idea of wall-to-wall action from the moment you got there,” Stallone enthused in 2013. “You knew you were in for a roller coaster. We stumbled upon something. The audience responded to it. It was man against man. That’s why we do it and we still do it because it’s in our blood.” You know what they say: if you can’t beat ’em... 🐱



ACTION



WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

PREDATOR

Conceived on a Californian beach, shot in a Mexican jungle, starring an Austrian bodybuilder: welcome to the turbulent making of an '80s action classic...

1983. Two brothers, Jim and John Thomas, are sitting on a Californian beach, bashing out their debut script. "We'd just stick an umbrella out there and work," recalls Jim. At the time, living nearby was Ernest Thompson, the playwright who, the previous year, had won an Oscar for his own debut script, *On Golden Pond*. Locked away in his "ivory-tower condominium", every day he'd look down and glimpse these upstarts scribbling away. "He finally couldn't stand it," laughs Jim. "He came and told us how jealous he was!"

While Thompson envied their makeshift beachside office, it was lucky he didn't glance over their shoulders to read what they'd written: a pulsating script that would launch a franchise and introduce the world to one of the great alien creations. *Predator*, as it eventually became known, was about to have its moment in the sun. "We had an idea about a brotherhood of hunters who came from another planet to hunt all kinds of things," says Jim. They realised it wouldn't work. "So we picked one hunter who'd hunt the most dangerous species – man."

In this case, the most dangerous man on earth, a combat soldier, armed with the most sophisticated weaponry available. Set in the jungles of Guatemala, *Predator* begins as an elite team of US soldiers are dispatched to find a missing "civilian" chopper crew. At it turns out, the vehicle was on a military sweep for rebel guerrillas, whom the CIA want scorched from existence. While the shooting script made references to the soldiers' past missions in Libya and Afghanistan (very topical right now), the Thomas brothers recall that in an early draft, team leader Dutch recalled an "embassy takeover" he'd once been involved in.

Released in 1987, the same year Oliver Stone's *Platoon* won Best Picture, *Predator* tapped into the

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1987

DIRECTOR John McTiernan

SCREENPLAY Jim and John Thomas

CAST Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carl Weathers, Elpidia Carrillo, Bill Duke, Jesse Ventura, Sonny Landham

BUDGET \$15-18m

BOX OFFICE \$98.3m

RUNNING TIME 107 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR 20th Century Fox

TAGLINE "It came for the thrill of the hunt. It picked the wrong man to hunt."

RELEASE DATE 12 June 1987





ACTION



Team players: (top, left to right) Sonny Landham, Carl Weathers, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Richard Chaves; (above) the Predator reveals itself.

right-wing driven craze for military movies, only to bend the genre right out of shape as the team gradually get picked off by the Predator. "The creature was descended from a long line of a warrior society," says John. "Obviously, he wasn't a game hunter. He was in this for trophies."

The Thomas brothers decided to create an alien that innately understood how to hunt, lure and trap. Stalking (using heat-sensitive vision), camouflage (via an invisibility cloak) and mimicking the call of its prey were the order of the day. Conveyed using sound loops and synthesised noises, the creature repeats back what it hears – most poignantly in the finale when Dutch asks, "What the hell are you?" and the Predator utters the same statement.

Finished in September 1983, the brothers started to shop the script around Hollywood. But without an agent, they couldn't get it read. So they resorted to slipping it under the door of Twentieth Century Fox employee Michael Levy. He passed it on to his colleagues. Lawrence Gordon, the veteran action producer who was in the midst of his two-year tenure as President of Fox, read the script in early 1984 and snapped it up.

With Gordon assigning underling John Davis to the project, it was the fledgling producer who was responsible for hiring John McTiernan as director. "We needed a fresh voice," says Davis, who had seen an early cut of McTiernan's debut feature *Nomads*, an evil-spirits tale starring Pierce Brosnan and, er, Adam



Ant. "I was very happy when they offered it to me," says McTiernan. "I'd always dreamed of doing an old-fashioned adventure movie, and *Predator* was clearly designed to be pure entertainment."

For McTiernan, the Thomas brothers' script contained everything he needed to assemble such a ride. "It combined elements you rarely find together: a classic hero story and a horror story, like the Norse myths, where heroes fight against supernatural beings," he says. "It also reminded me of the old war movies and comic books with men who were larger than life. It is in essence a battle of the titans."

Aside from Davis, Gordon made one other major appointment. He brought in Joel Silver, whom he'd given his start to on Walter Hill's 1979 thriller *The Warriors*. Silver had branched out on his own to make *Commando* with a certain Austrian bodybuilder. With previous military experience, having served a year in the Austrian army back in 1965, Arnold Schwarzenegger fell for *Predator* as soon as it was sent to him.

"I always wanted to do a film like *The Wild Bunch* or *The Magnificent Seven*, something like that, where

'It's like Norse myths, where heroes fight supernatural beings – a battle of the titans'

JOHN MCTIERNAN



Cunning plan: a camouflaged Arnie prepares a booby trap.

a team of guys work together, rather than relying on yourself,” says Schwarzenegger, who was cast as Dutch. “It’s much more realistic. But each one of those guys are very powerful guys. They’re not only great actors, but they’re physically strong and very experienced. They’re equals of mine.” Symbolised in the film’s opening moments when he and co-star Carl Weathers (who plays CIA drone George Dillon) engage in a bicep-bulging, dick-measuring handshake, Schwarzenegger recognised this feeling. “It took me back to my bodybuilding days, where you work with a bunch of guys and a camaraderie develops.”

Weathers, a former pro-football athlete who had risen to fame as rival boxer Apollo Creed in the *Rocky* franchise, was one of the few actors cast without military experience. Given the production was about to dump its cast and crew in the Mexican jungle for three months, casting director Jackie Burch wisely realised that he needed to recruit as many veterans as possible. The first was ex-Navy SEAL Jesse Ventura, a former wrestling pro who went by the nickname ‘The Body’ long before Elle Macpherson. Making his film debut, he was cast as Blain, “a 250lb killer who chews tobacco.”

Then there was Richard Chaves, a Vietnam veteran who had served in the 101st US Airborne and was cast as Poncho, the agile point-man of the unit. Reading the script, Chaves was instantly reminded of “the actual jungle experiences I had in Vietnam”. William ‘Sonny’ Landham, playing American-Indian tracker Billy, was the fourth cast member with military experience.

After six weeks of physical prep in Los Angeles, the actors were brought to Puerto Vallarta, on Mexico’s Pacific Coast, to step up their training. “We’d get up at 6am for breakfast and then run four or five miles to get into condition,” recalls Schwarzenegger. “After that we worked five or six hours in the jungle on skills training. We had to learn how to move silently through the jungle and communicate with hand signals. Then we went back to the weights room in the hotel and trained for two hours, and then John called us and said, ‘OK, now we rehearse!’”

Meanwhile, Pittsburgh native Shane Black, whose debut script, *Lethal Weapon*, was in production was asked to do a script rewrite. He ended up doing little to the script, which David Peoples (fresh off *Blade Runner*) had already taken a pass at. His biggest contribution was the two “pussy” gags that Hawkins tells, added to make his character memorable. “It was mostly me sitting with Joel Silver over some tequila telling jokes,” says Black. “I think the Thomas brothers, who wrote the script... I really think they hate those jokes. I don’t think they like them at all.” Other changes to the script were more practical, not least the final face-off between Dutch and the Predator. Originally intended to be in front of the creature’s spacecraft (glimpsed briefly in space during the opening credits), it was cut due to time and money.

Yet there were bigger problems to tackle. Just as the film itself is divided into three distinct mini-movies (Act I – the soldiers’ successful raid on the guerrilla camp; Act II – the Predator takes down the

team; Act III – Dutch and the Predator go mano-a-mano), so the 12-week shoot had allotted four weeks per segment. The final section, when the Predator fully reveals itself, was to be shot last. While the crew were working 19-hour days and shooting in 100-degree heat, back in the US, Richard Edlund, who’d been visual effects supervisor on *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* and *Poltergeist*, was beaver away to create the 7ft costume for the Predator (to be worn by actor Kevin Peter Hall).

Then came the bombshell. McTiernan took delivery of Edlund’s finished work. As the crate was prised open, his jaw dropped: “I turned to my assistant and said, ‘Now, we’re in trouble!’” According to the film’s editor Mark Helfrich, Edlund’s design laughably looked like “a giant red lobster”. For a film that more than earned its ‘18’ rating, with lashings of gore and gunfire, this just didn’t wash. Using the costume, McTiernan shot some test footage – the scene where Hawkins gets disembowelled and dragged into the undergrowth. “I sent it back to the studio and said, ‘You don’t want to continue with this, do you?’” he recalls. “And they looked at it and said, ‘No! Wait! Stop!’”

Two-thirds of the way in, *Predator* was shut down for eight months while McTiernan and co went back to the drawing board, quite literally. *An American Werewolf In London* effects guru Rick Baker was considered, but eventually Stan Winston was hired to (re)create the Predator. Fresh off an Oscar win for his work on James Cameron’s *Aliens*, he happened to be sitting next to the director on a plane heading for Japan when he started work on the design. “I was sketching concepts for the Predator. And Jim Cameron looked over to me and said, ‘You know, I always wanted to see something with mandibles.’”

Hastily, Winston etched in the moveable pincer-like appendages on the Predator – terrifyingly designed to fold and flare out (prompting Schwarzenegger to utter the classic line: “You’re one ugly motherfucker!”). Wanting to utilise a more naturalistic, humanoid appearance, Winston decked his creation in high-tech armour that even housed a pop-up medical kit and self-destruct detonator. It made for an “unusual look”, as FX technician Shane Mahan put it: “The creature is very cultural-looking, a mix between a Spartan and an African warrior.”

What makes *Predator* so successful is how gradually McTiernan and the Thomas brothers reveal their creature – from his heat-vision POV to the final pay-off, where he removes his helmet. Emphasising suspense more than action, it partially explains why the 1990 LA-set sequel *Predator 2* flopped – the surprise element that McTiernan played on was long gone. But when the original was released in the summer of 1987, audiences flocked to see it, with the film grossing \$60m at the box office.

Most critics dismissed it as just another brainless Arnie action movie. “It’s arguably one of the emptiest, feeblest, most derivative scripts ever made,” sneered the *Los Angeles Times*. Understandable really, with scenes such as “the mowdown”, when Mac unleashes Blain’s Gatling gun into the jungle in the vain hope of shooting the Predator. But, the Thomas brothers’ trophy hunter is still very much alive. “We had no idea that the film would be so well remembered,” exclaims Black. “You still see Predator t-shirts!” 🐾

**ACTION****FROM THE
ARCHIVES**ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED
IN 2014

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1982**DIRECTOR** Ted Kotcheff**SCREENPLAY** Michael Kozoll, William Sackheim, Sylvester Stallone**CAST** Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Brian Dennehy**BUDGET** \$15m**BOX OFFICE** \$125m**RUNNING TIME** 93 minutes**DISTRIBUTOR** Orion Pictures**TAGLINE** "This time he's fighting for his life."**RELEASE DATE** 22 October 1982

MOVIESTORE COLLECTION/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

FIRST BLOOD

It cemented Stallone as a superstar and invented the one-man-army action movies that would come to dominate '80s Hollywood. It paved the way for Schwarzenegger, Van Damme and Willis, as well as Neeson, The Rock and Diesel. We discover the brains behind the seminal brawn...

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

November 1981, deep in the woodland that surrounds the town of Hope, British Columbia. Three weeks into a six-week shoot, two stuntmen and the movie's star, Sylvester Stallone, prepare to enact *First Blood's* most memorable set-piece. In the movie, itinerant Vietnam vet John Rambo (Stallone) has escaped arrest and fled into the kind of untamed country he so excelled in during the war. Chased by Sheriff Teasle's (Brian Dennehy) men and a pack of baying dogs, Rambo stands at the edge of a stony cliff, overlooking the teeming Coquihalla River.

Canadian director Ted Kotcheff and his crew hide in the treeline 50 yards back, tied to tree trunks. Stallone slips and slides on the wet moss at the brink of the gorge, his only protection a length of rope bound to an ankle. He lowers himself over the edge, clinging to the sheer face by his fingertips as showers of scree tumble 150ft and squibs detonate all about, ricocheting into Stallone's eyes. A deputy is hanging out of a chopper, taking pot shots. And then... Rambo pushes off and plummets 30 or 40 feet into a row of towering evergreens, with stuntman Buddy Joe Hooker performing the crazed leap before Kotcheff cuts to a second stuntman tumbling branch to branch through the trees, and

Stallone taking over for the final drop onto a wide bough just above ground level.

"He wanted to do that final fall," Kotcheff tells *Total Film* 33 years on from the shoot. "I said, 'Please don't, Sylvester,' but he said, 'Ted, let me do it,' and he jumped off a branch and fell six feet to land on a very thick pine branch that did not give *at all*. He let out this incredible scream of pain. His face was right in camera – it's a great shot! – and then he slipped off the branch and fell to the ground. He'd cracked four ribs. But he kept on filming, never complained – he was a real trouper."

Stallone was making 1981 movie *Nighthawks* when he was approached about playing Rambo in *First Blood*. Based on David Morrell's 1972 novel of the same name, the project had been knocking around Hollywood for eight years, the rights finally picked up by Andrew G. Vajna and Mario Kassar, a pair of film distributors who sought to become producers. "At first, I thought it was a disastrous idea," remembers Stallone on the commentary track of the 2004 Ultimate Edition DVD. "Just about every viable leading man in Hollywood had passed on it, and about a half dozen directors."

He's not exaggerating. *First Blood* had worked through 18 screenplays and the character of Rambo had been linked to Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Clint Eastwood, Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, John >>



Travolta, and Dustin Hoffman; some passed on it because they considered the film to be too violent, others because the Vietnam War was too fresh in memories. With the benefit of hindsight, Stallone seems like an obvious choice, but in 1981 he was considered a huge risk.

"I worked on that script for a long time," Kotcheff says, "and finally the producer said, 'Who do you want to play it?' And I said, 'One guy I'd really love to play it is Sylvester Stallone.' And the producer went, 'Er... He only works in *Rocky*.' He'd done four other films at that time and they'd all flopped. I said, 'I don't give a damn.' So I sent it to him. The next morning he phoned me up and said, 'I love the script. I want to do it.'"

Not that Stallone didn't have his reservations. He now jokes that his prime incentive for taking *First Blood* was the "very, very lucrative fee", but right up to the start of the shoot he worried that it might put a bullet between the eyes of his career.

"I was having dinner at Burt Reynolds' house and he said, 'Even if the movie dies and you're good

'Sly cracked four ribs, but he kept on filming'

TED KOTCHEFF

in it, it doesn't matter.' I said, 'Burt, that's about the worst advice I've ever had, but thanks anyway'."

Before shooting began in and around the town of Hope, Stallone revised the script. For starters he toned down the violence, reducing Rambo's tally of kills from 16 to zero. He also changed the ending, choosing that Rambo should survive and penning a climactic mumble-monologue as all of his locked up rage and persecution finally spills out.

The shoot was a nightmare. Fog frequently interrupted filming while daylight leaked away

at 2.30pm. Andrew Laszlo, DoP, opted to make the most of the conditions by employing only natural light in order to present a grey-blue palette that was murky and moist. Not that he could do anything about the hazardous terrain, with Kotcheff recalling, "The floor of the woods was three feet deep with fallen trees and branches, so as you walked along you'd sink down. And the river banks would collapse. We all had to tie ourselves with ropes to trees, in case it gave way."

It wasn't until the shoot began that Stallone hit upon how he should play Rambo: "Incredibly guarded but very childlike, almost nebbish, a non-physical creature," he has noted. "He's a modern-day Frankenstein creature, created by the American military. It escapes and, like the Frankenstein monster, just wants to be absorbed into society." Cast out of Hope, spurned by society, this alienated man-child with his hooded eyes and hangdog face reverts to a killing machine.

But as much as *First Blood* is a Vietnam movie – Kotcheff received letters of thanks from Veteran

The hunt begins: tracking dogs seek out fugitive John Rambo in the woods; (opposite) Rambo (Sylvester Stallone) hits the road.



organisations for verbalising their plight – it's also a seminal action film, with its huge weaponry, death-defying set-pieces and fabulous stunt work pushing the genre to new limits.

Many of the enduring action sequences were performed by Stallone himself, with the actor streamlining his bulging *Rocky II* physique to 164lbs of lean muscle to better hurtle a motorbike through icy streets, and to leap from trees onto a speeding army truck. Worst of all was the set-piece in which Rambo escapes the National Guard by navigating a network of subterranean tunnels choked with freezing water and hundreds of rats. "We shot in these real underground caves," Kotcheff explains.

"Sylvester was up to his waist in icy water. I said, 'How much are we paying you?' And he said \$2m, or whatever it was. I said, 'No, you're doing the picture for free – *here* is where you earn the \$2m.' The rats were terrified of the icy water, so what happened is they dug their claws into his bare flesh. As he ripped them out, he lost chunks of flesh."

This was pre-CGI, so Stallone was required to "outrun" a real explosion that blows through the tunnels when the National Guard let fly, while the climactic scenes in the town of Hope saw the crew *really* blow up a gas station. Now, of course, we're used to seeing entire cities destroyed in the summer's event movies, but as Stallone rightly points out, back then "it was massive", and clearly laid down a gauntlet for the likes of Schwarzenegger and Willis to respond to.

And yet all of this new-level action and machismo was almost undercut by a single incident. Concerned that Stallone planned to leap onto the back of a wild boar to establish Rambo's hunting credentials, the filmmakers suggested they change the creature to something a little less perilous.

A deer, perhaps, or maybe a rabbit. Fortunately the star waved away such foolish interference, spitting, "Rambo can't be bit by a jackrabbit." Viewers were thus spared the embarrassment of watching a trained killer tussling to the death with a bunny and instead treated to Rambo riding rodeo on a 600lb honking beast as it crashed through the woods.

Taking its theatrical bow on 22 October 1982, *First Blood* took more than \$6.5m in its opening weekend and went on to net \$125m from a \$15m budget to become the 13th highest grossing film of 1982. The reviews were mixed, with Roger Ebert

'He's a modern Frankenstein. He just wants to be accepted'

SYLVESTER STALLONE

dismissing the final scenes but saying "*First Blood* is a very good movie, well-paced and well-acted", and *Variety* sniffing, "Director Ted Kotcheff has all sorts of trouble with this mess." A hit on VHS, *First Blood*'s fan base and reputation escalated over the years, with most critics now considering it a superior action movie with socio-political heft.


In the 32 intervening years since its release there have been three sequels with a fourth, *Rambo: Last Stand*, in development, though the original movie is

considered by far the most accomplished of the franchise. The second entry, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), was the biggest commercial hit, taking more than \$300m worldwide as it sent Rambo back to 'Nam to retrieve prisoners of war. With Rambo growing his muscles and his body count (67) in this pumped-up sequel, Kotcheff wanted no part of it.

"I had the right to do the sequel, but I read the script and said, 'I'm not going to do this. My film is against the war, and you're having a jingoistic celebration of the war. You're turning my first film upside down. This is against everything I was trying to say,'" he remembers. "They prevailed upon me to do it, but I didn't, because of all the killings."

Stallone disagrees, insisting Rambo was, is and always will be against the military, contending people misread the character in the sequels when he came to personify Reagan's right-wing foreign policy. "Reagan said, 'After seeing *Rambo*, I know what to do with Libya,'" Stallone has said, incredulous. "I was like, 'Oh God...'"

Whatever your take on the sequels, *First Blood* stands up. It is the missing link between Vietnam movies such as *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter* (both 1978) and the late '80s wave that began with Oliver Stone's Oscar-winning *Platoon*, and there can be no doubting that it was a game-changing action movie.

Stallone calls *First Blood* "the best action movie I've ever done", and such is its place in popular culture that a steady stream of pilgrims continue to visit the town of Hope, where the Chamber of Commerce provide tours of the film's locations. You can even take a helicopter ride over the gorge where that famous leap took place – just be careful not to fall out and smash your head on the rocks... 

TOM CRUISE

He took the decade by storm, seducing audiences with his fresh-faced good looks and wide, goofy grin. But the journey to the top wasn't always a cruise...

To begin with there was that smile, and that smile was dazzling. Recalling the first time you saw Tom Cruise flash those pearly-whites and grin from ear to ear is like knowing what you were doing during the first moon landing. Certainly the Cruise smile has grown broader in recent years, but back in the '80s, when this eager-to-please Syracuse-born kid was just starting out in movies, the salesman sappiness of that all-consuming grin was tempered by something else: a real fieriness untainted by good business sense. Cruise may have matured as an actor in films like *Jerry Maguire* and *Magnolia*, but there was an energy about him in the early '80s that has since calcified into hardened professionalism.

By the time he made *Top Gun* in 1986, producer Don Simpson had nicknamed him 'Laserhead' because of the way he was always buzzing, never content to be idle for a second. Tom didn't cruise. He controlled.

He was truly a star of the '80s, making his first on-screen appearance in Franco Zeffirelli's whimsical 1981 romance *Endless Love* and ending the decade with *Rain Man* and *Born On The Fourth Of July* – two deliberate bids to transcend the teen-star status that brought him fame, but with it unhappiness. What happened in between those bookends was a miraculous tale of talent outshone by perseverance. It was his fifth film, *Risky Business*, that made it clear that he was star material. Cruise had already been sweet and sunny in witty sex comedy *Losin' It*; he was moody in *All The Right Moves*; and he was just another face alongside the likes of Matt Dillon and Rob Lowe in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Outsiders*.

Risky Business nailed what it was that audiences responded to in Cruise, and what they would go on responding to – at least until he

started goofing around on Oprah's sofa and laying into shrinks. Quite simply, everyone wanted to have as much fun as Tom Cruise was evidently having. If we didn't want to be him, we wanted to know him.

With the talismanic allure that the film bestows upon Calvin Kleins, Ray-Bans and Porsches, and its carefree view of prostitution, this is a 24-frames-per-second epitome of the hedonistic, materialistic '80s. Cruise beat Tom Hanks and Nicolas Cage to the role of rich-kid Joel Goodsen, who trashes his father's Porsche while his parents are away and ends up running a brothel from his home in an effort to recoup the cost. But audiences didn't flock to the movie for its life lessons: most were there to see Cruise

Cruise was nicknamed 'Laserhead' because he was always buzzing. Tom didn't cruise, he controlled

slide into the living room in his socks, shades and 'tighty whities', singing along to Bob Seger's 'Old Time Rock And Roll' – a scene improvised by Cruise. He had the look of the boy next door. To anyone watching him on a cinema screen, he made adventure and stardom look attainable.

It was a measure of how well Cruise's image had been insulated by the popularity of *Risky Business* that it didn't all go down the pan with his appearance in Ridley Scott's misguided *Legend*. Cruise frolicked with fairies and unicorns, and was acted off the screen by a red-hot Tim Curry as the Devil. Yet he emerged unscathed from the farrago to work with Scott's brother Tony on the movie that really made him iconic.

Love it or hate it, *Top Gun* laid the foundation for everything that Cruise is today. Twenty years

on, and with its homoerotic subtext exposed by Quentin Tarantino and Roger Avary, it is hard to see it as anything more than a campaign to promote military hardware – and Tom Cruise. The actor was already attached to the project when Tony Scott was hired. "When the guys [producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer] first offered me *Top Gun*," remembered Scott, "I couldn't really see it." Cruise, though, was crucial in clinching the look and mood of the film – stylish, macho, self-regarding, flooded with machismo and bravado.

Meanwhile, in accepting the part of the anti-military ex-soldier Ron Kovic in Oliver Stone's *Born On The Fourth Of July*, for the first time in his career Cruise seemed to be taking responsibility

for the message of one of his own films. This, arguably, was the turning point in Cruise's life and career, and the clearest precursor of that point in the late '80s when he seemed conceivably set for world domination.

There had been other films between *Top Gun* and *Born On The*

Fourth Of July, as well as a wife – actress Mimi Rogers. Cruise was cast as the young pretender to pool champ 'Fast' Eddie Felson's title in *The Color Of Money*, and *Rain Man* was a great choice, even if the film is so blatantly a sideshow for Dustin Hoffman's Oscar-baiting performance that Cruise benefits merely by association.

Oliver Stone's picture confirmed his aspirations. Cruise doesn't always have the reserves of intensity upon which to draw for some of the picture's gruelling later passages, but his participation was as much a statement of intent as an actual achievement. He lost the Best Actor Oscar that year to Daniel Day-Lewis in *My Left Foot*, but the mere fact of being nominated proved that he was well on his way to being the actor he wanted to be. 🍷

Quote me

Cruise on his fantastic decade

ON YOUTH

"I remember getting through high school and thinking, 'Boy, I'm glad I've got that behind me!' Then, when I got *Risky Business* at 19, I realised, 'Ah, so this is life – it's a little bigger than I thought!'"

ON MAKING TAPS...

"When I was doing *Taps*, I would lose sleep. 'They're firing guys on this movie, I could be gone tomorrow. They're shooting guys next to me. I've shaved my head, [*the director's*] pissed, what am I going to do?!'"

ON RAIN MAN

"The first time an audience watched *Rain Man*, they didn't know it was funny. There I am grabbing Hoffman by the back of his neck saying, 'Stop acting like a fucking retard!' And I remember the audience was like, 'Whoa!' It was really wild. They didn't quite get that it was okay to laugh in the rest of the film."

ON WHAT HIS RISKY BUSINESS CHARACTER IS DOING NOW...

"He went to college, then became one of those corporate guys who got trashed in the dotcom crash."

ON COMEDY

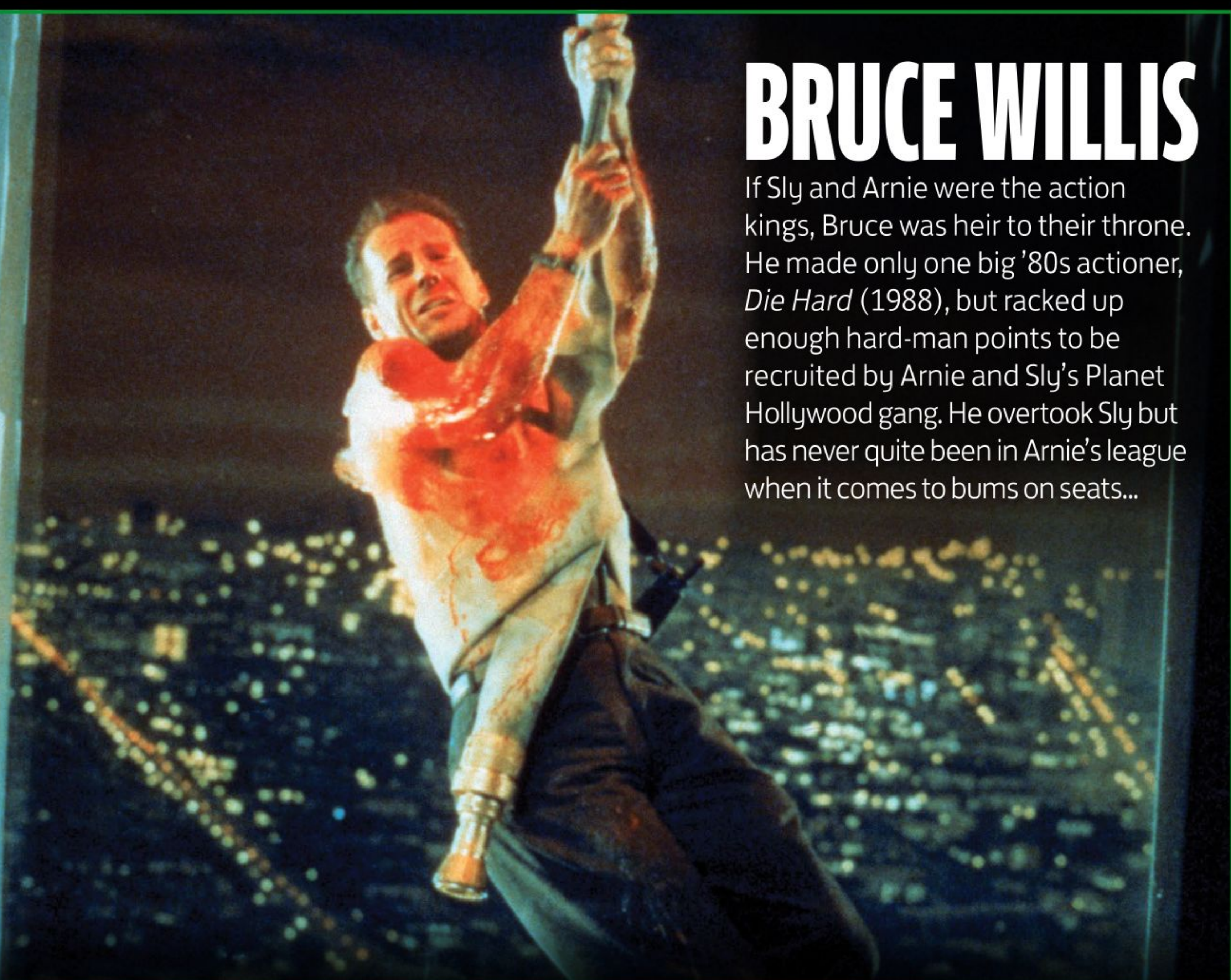
"I like comedy with drama. One of my favourite scenes in *Born On The Fourth Of July* is where the two guys argue over who's killed more babies."



HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

Arnie and Sly ruled the '80s action roost, but they weren't alone when it came to flexing, fighting and unforgettable one-liners...

WORDS **CERI THOMAS**



BRUCE WILLIS

If Sly and Arnie were the action kings, Bruce was heir to their throne. He made only one big '80s actioner, *Die Hard* (1988), but racked up enough hard-man points to be recruited by Arnie and Sly's Planet Hollywood gang. He overtook Sly but has never quite been in Arnie's league when it comes to bums on seats...



DOLPH LUNDGREN

The Swedish Karate champ kicked off his career with a teeny role in the 007 flick *A View To A Kill* (1985) before hitting the big time (hitting the big star, at any rate) as Ivan Drago in *Rocky IV* the same year. He managed a trio of cultified wobblers before the end of the decade, with *Masters Of The Universe*, *The Punisher* and *Red Scorpion* colouring his CV, before settling in as the king of the '90s straight-to-video actioner.

UNITED ARTISTS

CHUCK NORRIS

The old man on the action block (he's ancient enough to have worked on John Wayne's claggy *The Green Berets* in 1968), Norris was churning out cheap-and-not-so-cheerful actioners all decade long. Three *Missing In Action* flicks, the first *Delta Force* film, *Lone Wolf McQuade* and a string of movies with irony-free titles such as *Forced Vengeance*, *Silent Rage* and *Invasion USA* made its bearded physog the best known visage on the video shop's action shelf.



KURT RUSSELL

Specialising in gritty, indie actioners, the man known as Mr Goldie Hawn started the '80s admirably with two John Carpenter films, *Escape From New York* (1981) and *The Thing* (1982). But he took his foot off the pedal mid-decade with some career-crippling movies with the missus. He later reteamed with Carpenter for the underrated *Big Trouble In Little China*, poking fun at the whole action genre...



JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME

No Retreat No Surrender, *Bloodsport*, *Black Eagle*, *Cyborg*, *Kickboxer*... The Muscles from Brussels was churning out much the same B-standard high-kicking nonsense as Lundgren in the '80s but managed to graduate to better things in the '90s as the likes of *Hard Target*, *Timecop* and *Double Impact* briefly gave him a little bit more clout. 📺



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

We love '80s... ACTION

Toht's so evil he makes his own skin crawl...



When actors wish to subtly disgust us, a great trick is to speak with a kind of wet-mouthed malice, as if every word comes moistened – or perhaps poisoned – with spit. But *Raiders Of The Lost Ark's* Nazi torturer Major Arnold Ernst Toht (Ronald Lacey) seems to be leaking with sadistic glee.

Never identified in the film by name, Toht was called "Belzig" in Lawrence Kasdan's script (presumably this was considered too similar to "Belloq", as played by Paul Freeman) and has a total of just 16 lines. All the same, Toht casts a stark shadow across the film, and Lacey's so creepy he set the template for screen Nazis for the next decade.

The character was originally conceived as a cyborg with a flame-throwing metal arm, but Lacey is so

unnerving such excesses were deemed unnecessary. With his bald (shaved) head and rounded specs, Lacey (who died in 1991) has "an unusual pug look with beady eyes and cherub's cheeks" plus an "unforgettable demonic smile and peculiar Peter Lorre mannerisms". And that's just his IMDb bio... We hate to think what his critics would have said about him.

Introduced, in the Nepal bar scene, Toht and his goons enter looking for the headpiece of the Staff Of Ra, but quickly

'Toht has just 16 lines but he casts a stark shadow across the film – he's so creepy he set the template for screen Nazis'

graduate to threatening owner Marian (Karen Allen) with a red-hot poker. "You don't need that! I'll tell you everything!" she screams. "Yesssssssh," Toht purrs damply, "I know you will." This is clearly a man who takes pleasure in his work: witness the delight as his palm closes around the red-hot headpiece – perhaps cinema's most ill-considered grip – or the giggle that accompanies his crueller pronouncements.

After being seen off by Indy (Harrison Ford), Toht disappears for another act and

barely troubles the narrative again, but that doesn't stop him leaving an impression. We next encounter him in the Egyptian desert. "We meet again, Fraulein," he sneers at Marian.

What Toht (and Lacey's singular presence) evokes is the implied violence running

through *ROTLA* like a black vein. It's an adventure film for children, so Spielberg can't show what metal really does to flesh (or what bad men really do to women), instead combining the threat of Toht's sadism with physical details such as his burnt palm, to hint at unimaginable – or unshowable – horrors. Casting the Nazis as bad guys also legitimises everything Indy throws at them. This is why *ROTLA* and *The Last Crusade* remain rollicking good fun, while *The Temple Of Doom*, set in India, feels a bit racist.

But Toht isn't your usual Nazi, he's quasi-demonic: just watch the way his face glows orange behind the poker, or blue in the desert lightning. When the Ark is revealed to contain nothing more than smoke and sand, he gives a madcap cackle, as if neither man nor God mean anything to him, although the latter has the last laugh. As the Ark angel becomes a shrieking destroyer, Toht's face melts into a mush of decidedly un-PG red and white goo. It leaks, ironically, everywhere. **Matt Glasby**



HORROR

THE SPLAT PACK

Video revolution:
Cannibal Holocaust
(above) and *The
Evil Dead* (main, far
right) were banned
as 'Video Nasties'

THE '80s SAW THE ARRIVAL OF THE VCR AND THE VIDEO RECORDINGS ACT, WHICH SINGLED OUT A RAGBAG OF OBSCURE EXPLOITATION HORRORS AND DECLARED THEM A THREAT TO BRITISH CIVILISATION. THE VIDEO NASTY WAS BORN...

WORDS ANDY LOWE

Rape Of Our Children's Minds!" cried a *Daily Mail* headline on 30 June 1983. "Turn back this tide of degenerate filth!" slobbered the editorial. "Are we insane?" it pondered. "Are we bent on rotting our society from within?" And then the clincher: "How many more women will be savaged and defiled by youths weaned on a diet of rape videos?"

It's hard to believe now that home entertainment could be seen as such a public menace. But in recession-wracked and crime-crippled '80s Britain, the government was looking for something to blame. And it found it in the 'Video Nasty', a tabloid folk devil that proved a lot more eye-catching than plain old economic incompetence.

So how exactly did we get to the bizarre position of the country's politicians passing laws against what amounts to a fistful of obscure exploitation movies? For the answer to that, it's necessary to start at the beginning...

Video came to this country in the late '70s, with no legislation governing its content. As a new format, it didn't have to answer to any regulation, so was practically exempt from judgement under Britain's Obscene Publications Act. Even though the UK had more video players per household than any other country in the world, major distributors were initially reluctant to deal in a medium so vulnerable to piracy. This cleared the way for small, less picky independent companies to respond to the demand by buying up the rights to a slurry of low-budget European and American horror flicks.

As the market became flooded, the indies battled to out-lurid each other, with ever more grotesque video covers and taglines. But the cheap-shock sleeves (cannibals chomping on intestines for *Cannibal Holocaust*, an unfortunate bearded man donating his forehead to a Black & Decker for *The Driller Killer*) and catchy copy ("Who will survive – and what will be left of them?" for *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*) were only the start of the process. Distributors thought nothing of exaggerating and sometimes plain lying about the films' content and this hardcore, hard-sell approach was bound to court the wrong kind of attention.

Eyebrows began twitching when the versions of movies being released on video didn't tally with those previously approved on film by the British Board of Film Censors (or BBFC: that 'C' now stands for the cuddlier "Classification"). They were longer, 'uncut' editions and, even worse, many videos of films that had originally been refused cinematic classification.

On 7 May 1982, the tabloids flinched, with the *Daily Star* reporting that "the video boom is giving youngsters a chance to see some of the most horrific and violent films ever made". BBFC director,

the late James Ferman, was quoted as being "furious" at the situation. Later that month, the *Daily Mail* waded in with a feature called 'How High-Street Horror Is Invading Our Homes'. The piece explained that videos featuring "extremes of violence" were being made "available to anyone of any age". A crucial phrase was coined: "The 'Nasties' are far removed from the suspense of the traditional horror film."

The BBFC and British Videogram Association set up a working party to look into the issue of self-regulation, but a bulldozing media (aided by pressure groups like Mary Whitehouse's) was urging the government to control video through formal legislation – something the naturally hands-off Tory government was keen to avoid.

In June 1982, British police began to target potential Nasties and send them to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to see if a case could be made for contravention of the Obscene Publications Act. Films seized included *The Last House On The Left*, *SS Experiment Camp*, *I Spit On Your Grave*, *The Driller Killer* and *The Evil Dead*. The BVA/BBFC working party claimed that they wouldn't be able to grade these and other films because they wouldn't be awarded a normal cinema certificate.

After the re-election of the Tory party on 9 June 1983, the Home Secretary's earlier insistence on self-regulation had turned into a public declaration by PM Margaret Thatcher that it was time for a legislative solution. A few weeks after the initial seizures, the DPP made it clear that video was answerable to the Obscene Publications Act and cited *SS Experiment Camp*, *The Driller Killer*, *Death Trap*, *I Spit On Your Grave* and *Cannibal Holocaust* as liable for prosecution.

As the DPP stacked up its list of potentially prosecutable videos, Tory MP Graham Bright announced he was introducing a Private Members' Bill that would formalise the process of controlling and censoring video. Bright was a political cipher who'd had to resign from his post as minor Parliamentary Private Secretary in order to do the government's dirty work. As he prepared his Video Recordings Bill, the *Daily Mail* stirred things up with a "Ban These Sadist Videos!" campaign – backed up with the "Rape Of Our Children's Minds" editorial.

At the second reading of Bright's Video Recordings Bill, the police screened a Best/Worst Of compilation of the Nasties' excesses for MPs. "During this screening, MPs and hardened policemen were physically ill," screamed the *Mail*. On 12 July 1984, Britain became the only European country to have its videos state-censored, as the Video Recordings Act passed into law. In the year

it took for the bill to become law, dubious tales of "Nasty-inspired" killings kept the fires burning and David Hamilton Grant, responsible for distributing *Nightmares In A Damaged Brain*, became the first person to be prosecuted for distributing obscene material. He got 18 months in prison.

For those out to make money from the video boom, though, the rewards were too high to worry about the threat of prosecution.

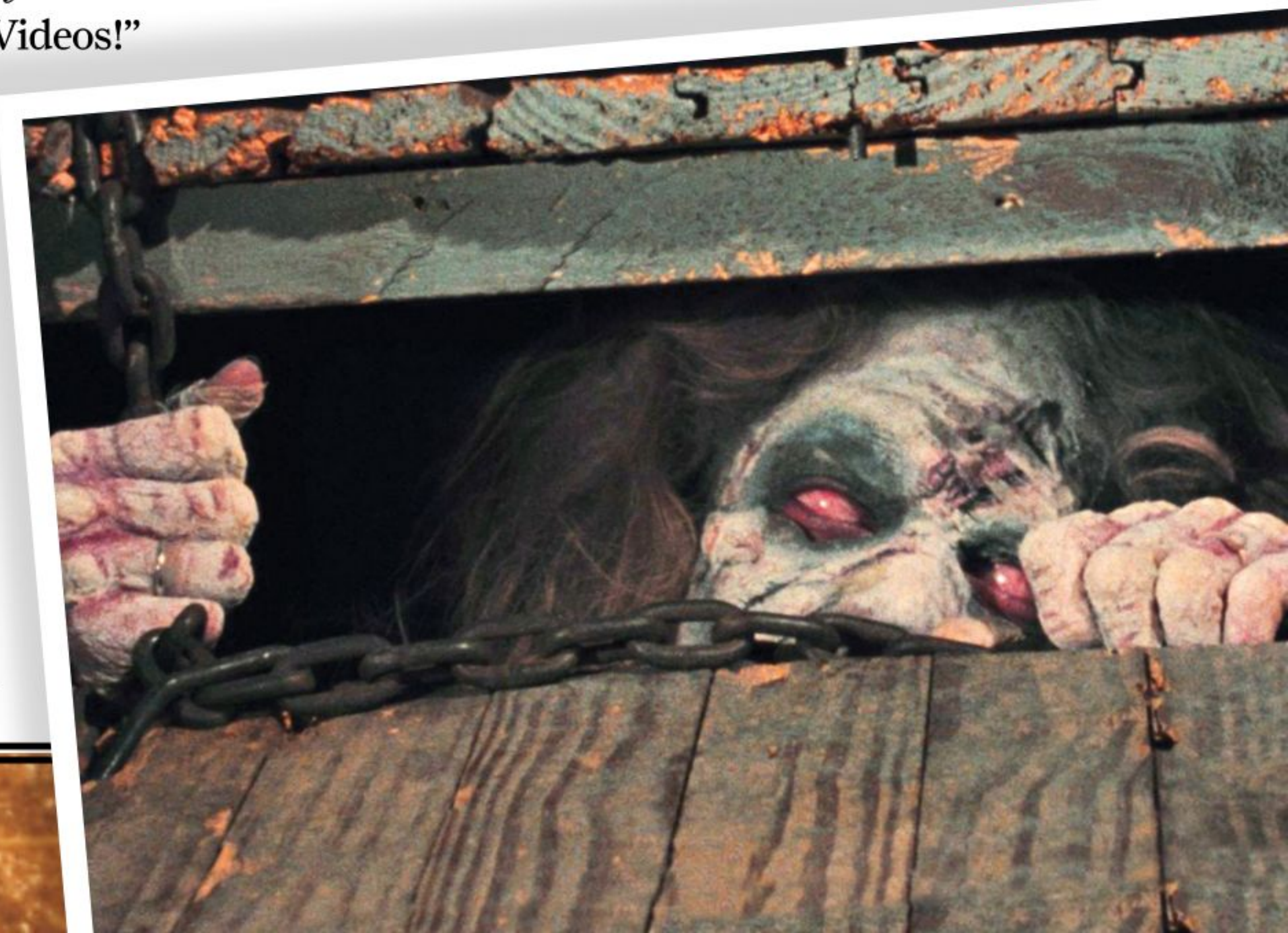
Before the bill had even become law, eight independent-video traders were sent to court and the police activity was stepped up. The moment police got their hands on the official Nasties list, video-shop owners stayed a step ahead through an informal info network. One of the big appeals of the Nasty wasn't the actual content of the films. It was the idea of getting hold of something forbidden.

"It made people want to see the films that were banned," says Garry Hodder, who ran a Manchester video shop at the time. "Until then, no one was interested in obscure European horror films. Video Nasties were partly responsible for the boom in video. Because people wanted to see these banned films so badly, they bought video recorders just to watch them. I saw more copies of *The Evil Dead* after it was banned than I did before it was on the list."

The Video Recordings Act was a kind of Year Zero for the BBFC. It was suddenly placed in a strong – and highly lucrative – position. No video could be made commercially available unless it had been seen, classified and sometimes scissored by the Board. Although its position as the national arbiter of taste has strengthened over the years, the BBFC's outlook has liberalised – but not out of goodwill.

"Each act of liberalisation has come about because companies have successfully challenged them on legal issues," says Nigel Wingrove, who's had many run-ins as head of UK distributor Salvation Films. "I think the BBFC should be turned into an advisory body. They continue to follow the guidelines of 1984, but the world is a different place now."

Over 20 years on, shifting tastes and values have made most of the original Nasties available. The 'Video Nasties' era now seems quaint and distant. But clearly the climate of nannyish censorship it created is still pervasive. "It's a protective thing," says Wingrove. "Men trying to protect women from these darker areas of sex and violence, and the middle classes trying to shield the working classes. It's okay for us clever folk to watch sexy, violent art films, but we mustn't allow it into the hands of the masses – particularly on video. In the early '80s, the idea of videos being easy to get hold of was too much for the taste mediators to stomach..."



HORROR

If you're not
back by midnight...
you won't be
coming home!

A SIMCOM PRODUCTION
LESLIE NIELSEN - JAMIE LEE CURTIS in "PROM NIGHT"
SCREENPLAY BY WILLIAM GIBBY - STORY BY ROBERT GUZZA, JR.
PRODUCED BY PETER SIMPSON - DIRECTED BY PAUL LYNCH
LEAVED EMBASSY PICTURES PRESENTS

PROM
NIGHT



HALLOWEEN II

ALL NEW



From The People Who Brought You "HALLOWEEN"...
More Of The Night He Came Home.

MIRAMAX FILMS PRESENTS A JOHN DE LAURENTIS FILM

JAMIE LEE CURTIS

HALLOWEEN II - A JOHN CARPENTER / MIRAMAX FILMS PRODUCTION - JOHN CARPENTER - DEBRA HILL - ROCK ROSENTHAL
DEBRA HILL - JOHN CARPENTER - DEBRA HILL - ROCK ROSENTHAL - DEBRA HILL - JOHN CARPENTER - DEBRA HILL - ROCK ROSENTHAL - DEBRA HILL - JOHN CARPENTER - DEBRA HILL - ROCK ROSENTHAL



SLASH HAPPY

The 1980s was a decade soaked in blood featuring more screaming teenagers than a Wham! concert. Thanks to Freddy Krueger, an assortment of masked killers and blood by the bucket-load, it remains the Golden Age of the slasher movie...

WORDS JOSH WINNING

A girl is home alone at night. The phone rings, but it's not her boyfriend saying he's coming over. It's a man who rasps threats down the line before butchering the girl and melting into the shadows. For hordes of horror fans in the 1980s, that bloodthirsty scenario will be all too familiar. Tapping into teen fears – sex, strangers, uh, household safety – slasher films were the party flicks of the '80s. They were loud, gory, sexy romps that celebrated the folly of youth while punishing those who had a little too much fun.

"The most successful '80s slasher movies worked best as relentless boo machines and popcorn spillers," says J.A. Kerswell, author of seminal genre study *The Slasher Movie Book*. "In some ways they are childlike in their simplicity and repetitive nature. They are the ultimate comfort horror... It's not that we shouldn't be challenged by the films we watch, but there's lots to be said for slipping on a pair of blood-soaked slippers."

And what blood there is. Thanks to the phenomenal popularity of *Friday The 13th* (1980) and its pioneering prosthetic effects, gore equalled green in the '80s. It wasn't always that way, though. Modern slasher history began with *Psycho* (1960), and while Alfred Hitchcock's film bears little surface similarity to the candypop slashers of the '80s, there's definitely shared DNA in its shock tactics and blonde, clothes-shedding central victim.

It was 1974's *Black Christmas*, though, that distilled the slasher formula. Set in a Canadian sorority, its girls vs faceless monster premise pre-dates John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) by four years, and features a sorority house's share of proto-slasher ingredients. There's the killer POV, the scary phone calls, the screaming young women who die in grotesquely creative (and entertaining) ways.

"You can trace the heritage of the slasher movie back to the Old Dark House thrillers of the 1930s and beyond," adds Kerswell. "However, Carpenter's film was the moment when all this coalesced into what we tend to think of as the slasher movie today: the unstoppable killer vs the resourceful heroine."

Come 1980 and the release of *Friday The 13th* – which aimed to capitalise on *Halloween*'s success – the slasher movie hit the ground running. Dreamt up by director Sean S. Cunningham as a "jump out of your seat" thrill ride, *Friday The 13th* set the template for the decade. Branding itself "the most terrifying film ever made", it's set around a summer camp where a group of counsellors (including a young Kevin Bacon) bed-hop before being graphically murdered by a mysterious figure.

Shot in New Jersey for just \$550,000, it turned a healthy profit at the box office (\$59.8m), but the critics weren't kind. "*Friday The 13th* has nothing to exploit but its title," wrote *Variety*, and even Betsy Palmer, who played Mrs Voorhees, reportedly pooched the script as "a piece of shit".

Meanwhile, the slasher sub-genre was singled out as representing a society succumbing to increasingly loose morals, and even horror fans were up in arms, writing to *Fangoria* in disgust over a sub-genre that was giving horror a bad name.

The beauty of the slasher sub-genre, though, is that – not unlike Michael Bay's superficially successful *Transformers* films – it remains critic-proof. And with *Friday The 13th*'s groundbreaking

effects stealing the show ("I liked the axe in the face," FX maverick Tom Savini later reminisced), the era of the blood-soaked horror franchise was born. *Friday The 13th* became a cinema mainstay, with a sequel released every year until 1986, and to really gauge its influence, all it takes is a quick glance at the films released in its wake.

While 1981 flicks *My Bloody Valentine*, *The Burning* and *The Prowler* all took the same stalk-n-slash approach, it's most telling that even John Carpenter himself bowed to pressure with the gorier, more set-piece driven *Halloween II* (1981). Co-written with Debra Hill and directed by Rick Rosenthal, it continued the night *he* came home as Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis) is taken to a hospital where Michael Myers continues his murderous rampage.

Curtis herself was the original Scream Queen (fitting, considering her mother played *Psycho*'s ill-fated Marion Crane), tackling psycho killers in *Halloween*, *The Fog*, *Prom Night* and *Terror Train*. Other so-called 'Final Girls' – whose elevated IQs helped them escape the killers their friends couldn't – included Amy Steel, Dee Wallace and Adrienne Barbeau, but none reached the same heights as Curtis.

It's a role she embraced. "In a horror film you start out like a normal person and then you end up being a terrorised individual," Curtis said in documentary *Fear On Film: Inside The Fog* (1980). "So you have all this range to play; you go from sad to happy, crying... Determination, bravery. And all those things come into a horror film if you're the person who inevitably gets terrorised. So it enables you to show your stuff in a very broad sense."

And if the sub-genre gave us nothing else, it was female heroes who could hold their own. "It would be silly to say that many slasher films didn't often exploit the female form," says Kerswell. "However, the Golden Age slasher set the template for the trope of the Final Girl fighting back against her attacker. The slasher movie gave the world the empowered horror femme, and that has to count for something."

The slasher craze burned bright and fast. The Golden Era is widely considered to have occurred between 1980 and 1983, but as Jason Voorhees got ready to (briefly) hang up his machete in *Friday The 13th: The Final Chapter* (1984), a certain dreamweaver revolutionised the slasher movie in *A Nightmare On Elm Street* (1984). Toying with slasher conventions, Wes Craven's film boasted a devilishly clever premise as teens are terrorised in their sleep. "Wes Craven and *ANOE*s closed the Golden Age of the sub-genre by ramping up both the bogeyman and Final Girl to the nth degree," Kerswell notes.

Thanks to Craven and Robert Englund, knife-fingered Freddy Krueger became a poster-boy for 1980s horror, representing both the best and worst the slasher had to offer. At his best, Freddy was a terrifying, disfigured serial killer of mythic proportions. At his worst – especially towards the end of the '80s – he was stamped all over kid's lunchboxes as some kind of cartoon superhero, a sure sign that the genre had lost its ability to shock.

That doesn't mean there weren't some hugely entertaining films along the way to the genre's demise at the tail end of the 1980s. And thanks to fresh blood like writer Kevin Williamson, the slasher genre enjoyed a resurgence in the mid '90s. "A scary movie is a roller coaster ride. So it sort of hits all the buttons," he said around the release of *Scream 2*

Scream queens The top five '80s horror heroines



JAMIE LEE CURTIS
'80s Hits: *Halloween II*, *The Fog*, *Prom Night*, *Terror Train*



HEATHER LANGENKAMP
'80s Hits: *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, *Shocker*



AMY STEEL
'80s Hits: *Friday The 13th Part 2*, *April Fool's Day*




DEE WALLACE
'80s Hits: *The Howling*, *Cujo*, *Critters*



ADRIENNE BARBEAU
'80s Hits: *The Fog*, *Creepshow*

(1997). "You get to laugh. You get to jump. You get to scream." Which partly explains the attraction of the slasher. Thirty years on, they're as popular as ever, their iconic anti-heroes still burned in our minds, their stories pillaged for an endless wave of remakes.

"I wear my *Halloween* pin with great pride," Jamie Lee Curtis admits in the documentary *Halloween Unmasked 2000*, over two decades after she became the Scream Queen du jour. And why shouldn't she be proud? Bloody, over-the-top and unintentionally funny as they may be, slasher movies remain hugely entertaining. They really are a scream. 

A Nightmare ON ELM STREET

In 1984, Wes Craven dreamed up the bogeyman to end all bogeymen and a nightmare was born. We go behind the make-up to tell the whole glove story...

WORDS OLIVER PFEIFFER ADDITIONAL REPORTING MARK SAMUELS

One, two, Freddy's coming for you. Three, four, better lock your door..." Over 30 years have elapsed since that chilling nursery rhyme was uttered, yet it still has the power to whisk us back to Elm Street – that leafy lane in Anywhere USA that became the hunting ground for a pizza-faced child murderer who refused to stay

dead. Thanks to Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator*, Jason Voorhees in *Friday The 13th: The Final Chapter* and those ugly little critters in *Gremlins*, 1984 was not exactly short of implacable killing machines. What gave Freddy Krueger the edge, though, was his ability to stalk the dreams of his unsuspecting victims – a demonic USP which made sleep itself his ally and allowed director Wes Craven, then best known for such grimy splatter-fests as *The Last House On The Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes*, to tap directly into our deepest and darkest fears.

"In the late '70s I had read about this family where the son started having severe nightmares,"

states Craven when asked how *ANOES* came to be. "He described this human-like figure chasing him, and became convinced that if he were caught by this entity, he would die. He reached the point where he was literally afraid to fall asleep. This guy knew if he slept, he was going to die."

Yet Wes could also draw on something closer to home – a trauma from his childhood that began one night when he was stirred awake by sounds emanating from outside his bedroom window. "I heard this mumbling, I crept to the window and saw this drunken old man," the director recalls. "The eerie thing was somehow he sensed he was being watched. He looked straight up at my window and saw me looking at him. How did he know he was being observed? It was one of those terrifying things where it felt like this adult was going to come and get me."

That wasn't the last piece of the *A Nightmare On Elm Street* puzzle to be taken from Craven's past. Back in school, the future filmmaker had shared a paper route with one Fred Krueger, a Cleveland classmate who bullied him relentlessly. Years later Wes exacted partial revenge by naming *The Last*

House On The Left's Krug after his old nemesis. With Freddy, though, the payback was total – even if Craven did make his villain a child murderer rather than a molester, lest he be accused of capitalising on a notorious abuse scandal that was making headlines at the time. "Originally there was a hint of paedophilia," nods Robert Englund, the jobbing actor eventually cast as everybody's favourite razor-fingered boogeyman. "But there was this huge scandal while we were shooting the movie, so Wes obviously downplayed any hint of that. Instead he made Freddy's crimes more of a symbolic nature. What are children? Children are the future. Freddy's killing the future – he's killing innocence."

For three years Craven shopped his *ANOES* script around Hollywood only to be rejected at every turn. But then he met Robert Shaye, founder of a little film distribution outfit called New Line with ambitions to move into production. Robert – Bob to his friends – recognised the imaginative and commercial possibilities of the story and set about raising the capital required. It wasn't easy. "Since the bank wouldn't loan us money >>

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1984

DIRECTOR Wes Craven

SCREENPLAY Wes Craven

CAST Heather Langenkamp, Amanda Wyss, Nick Corri, Johnny Depp, Robert Englund, John Saxon

BUDGET \$1.8m

BOX OFFICE \$25.5m

RUNNING TIME 91 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR New Line Cinema

TAGLINE "If Nancy doesn't wake up screaming she won't wake up at all...."

RELEASE DATE 9 November 1984

HORROR

Hand of horror: (main) Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) falls asleep in the bath, at her peril; (bottom) Nancy's school dream begins; (right) "Hey Nancy, no running in the hallway!"; (far right) Nancy follows the fiery footsteps upstairs.



to make this movie, I had to not only undertake to develop the script but also to go out and raise the finances," he recalls ruefully. "We had to pay them out of our own pocket, solely on my belief that we could somehow put the financing together."

"People had a hard time believing it would work," remembers Craven, who believes his film tackles "all the basic primal things that can be frightening to human beings". "Everyone who read the script felt the audience would not respond, because half of it was in dreams and they wouldn't know it wasn't real. I kept stipulating Freddy was able to kill you in a dream. That's why I included the scene where Tina [*Freddy's first victim*] is having a nightmare and wakes to find her nightdress is slashed – to prove that what happens in the dream will be done to you physically."

Yes, but by whom? It's hard to credit now, but Los Angeles native Englund was far from the first choice for what would go on to be his signature role. Instead Craven looked at older actors, only to find them "all mellowed out by life. I also tried out stuntmen but they played it more toward the comedic and I wanted Freddy to be deeply evil."

When a scheduling clash ruled out British character player David Warner, Englund found himself in the running. "I just sat there and stared at Wes," he recalls. "I don't know what I expected – Charlie Manson sitting behind a desk, carving human hearts or something. But he was this erudite, attractive gentleman, and when he told me how this movie should be, the mix of fantasy, horror and surrealism he wanted to imbue in the film... I was really taken with the man as a sort of dark artist."

"When Robert Englund came in he looked very cherubic," says Craven. "But his enthusiasm was

immense, and he showed no signs of being afraid to bring evil out of himself. In fact, he was intrigued by the idea of being truly evil." Back when *ANOE*S was in the works, evil – whether personified by Michael Myers in the *Halloween* films, Leatherface in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* or the aforementioned Jason Voorhees – tended to don a mask. Craven, though, had no interest in concealing his antagonist. "I thought of the idea of scar tissue," he says. "It seemed to be perfect, while still giving a kind of mask-like effect."

Having worked on Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video the year before, make-up man David Miller was ideally placed to devise Freddy's look – a repugnant carapace that took three hours to apply. Englund, however, found a use for his ordeal in the chair. "I remember sitting there once and my co-stars were getting make-up put on, as if they needed it. They were these beautiful, young kids, and here I was, getting basted with a turkey baster full of KY jelly. I envied them their youth, their beauty, and a light bulb went off – 'I could use this as Freddy.' It was a short-hand for me to get angry."

And then there were the claws: that lethal set of homemade talons that became as much a part of Freddy's persona as his stripey jumper, battered fedora and cackling, punny wisecracks. "It occurred to me that the human hand was what separated us from animals," expounds Craven, who was inspired in part by the sight of his cat clawing at the side of his sofa. "To put knives on the end of the fingers was just a perfect tool." Yes, and precarious too, according to effects man Jim Doyle. "The first time



Robert tried on the glove he cut himself," he remembers. "He didn't realise that if you folded your fingers all the way the knives went into your wrist."

Bad guy in place, Craven set about finding his heroine – a character who, having been stung by his daughter's criticisms of the female lead in his earlier *Swamp Thing* ("Dad, girls can run just as well as boys can!"), he resolved to make a strong and self-reliant protagonist who confronted her fears. "I understood what his vision for Nancy was right away and always felt she reflected a lot of my own personality," says Heather Langenkamp, the Tulsa-born actress who landed the role in front of Jennifer Grey, Demi Moore and more than 200 other hopefuls.

"Wes was very trustworthy, and I knew I wasn't going to look silly or ridiculous. It was clear that he was creating a new heroine of horror – one that could jump head first into the problem without



looking foolish." Jessica Craven also proved pivotal when it came to the casting of Nancy's boyfriend Glen, a role that went to a then-unknown fledgling by the name of Johnny Depp. "I came home with pictures of these guys I thought girls would find attractive," the director recalls. "I showed them to my daughter. Johnny had long, greasy, grungy hair and his fingers were stained from nicotine, but my daughter instantly pointed at his picture and said 'He's beautiful!'"

Having only just turned 21, Depp was clearly nervous throughout the production. Yet Craven was struck by his incredible conviction. "I could see that he was fighting real fear, but he was very real and appealing," he says admiringly. "He said his two biggest influences were Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, which really impressed me."

"Wes wanted a jock, while Johnny was a sensitive, softly-spoken guy," says Jsu Garcia, who played the role of leather-jacketed Rod under his then-stage name Nick Corri. "We immediately became super friends. This was the era of the *Friday The 13th* movies where there was just gore, stabbings and making love at the lake. Johnny and I swore we would make Shakespeare out of this!"

Both Jsu and Johnny would come to a sticky end in *ANOES*. Arguably, though, the grisliest exit belongs to Amanda Wyss's Tina, who expires hideously after being dragged up a wall and onto a ceiling. It was Fred Astaire who was responsible, his gravity-defying dance routine in 1951's *Royal Wedding* inspiring Craven to utilise the same sort of rotating set. "The actress had a difficult time doing it," he

recalls. "She got nauseous and had this sense of not knowing what reality was. So I had to stop the room and stick my head in to reassure her. Then I started to feel nauseous!" So were the MPAA when they saw the scene, demanding Craven do away with its gruesome climax. "There was one cut I hate to this day, which is where she falls off the ceiling and hits the bed," the director sighs. "Visually it was an amazing splash, but the censors wouldn't allow it."

Thankfully the film had better luck with another now-iconic sequence – the one in which the slumbering Nancy is attacked in her bathtub by Krueger's razored glove, first seen emerging salaciously between Langenkamp's teenaged thighs. The scene required the construction of a bath with no bottom, built on top of a tank in which Jim Doyle lay submerged. "There were a lot of takes because getting it just right in camera was very hard," the starlet remembers. "The part where he pulled me underwater was challenging to make interesting and tense, but it was a lot of fun to do."

If Craven had had his way, Nancy's eventual triumph over her sneering pursuer would have been the last we saw of Old Pepperoni Features. Shaye, though, saw a franchise in the offing and insisted upon a last-minute sting – a *Carrie*-style whammy implying Freddy was still alive and kicking. "I would have done a slightly different ending," Craven concedes. "But Bob was a real help during the rewrites and he was a good collaborator and encourager." It was Shaye, indeed, who decided to let New Line release *ANOES* themselves – a gamble that paid off handsomely when the film made back the lion's share of its \$1.8m budget within its opening weekend. All in all, says Craven, "it was a pretty damn good working relationship."

Six sequels, a *Freddy Vs Jason* mash-up and a misguided 2010 reboot are testament to how *ANOES* re-invigorated the ailing slasher sub-genre and gave Craven the horror maestro reputation he enjoys today. Englund could hardly have dreamed he'd become a sex symbol. "There was some kind of Goth, S&M infatuation with the Freddy claw," he says of the freaky fan-base he accrued at the height of his '80s celebrity. "They liked the glove more than they liked me. It got a little too kinky in terms of what those girls were proposing..."

I WAS REALLY TAKEN WITH WES CRAVEN AS A DARK ARTIST **ROBERT ENGLUND**

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

RECURRING NIGHTMARE

Bloggers' guide to the Elm Street sequels



FREDDY'S REVENGE 1985

The sequel Wes Craven never wanted. Encounters with gym teachers, shower scenes and gay S&M bars led many to speculate that lead Jesse (Mark Patton) was struggling more with his sexuality than with supernatural devils.



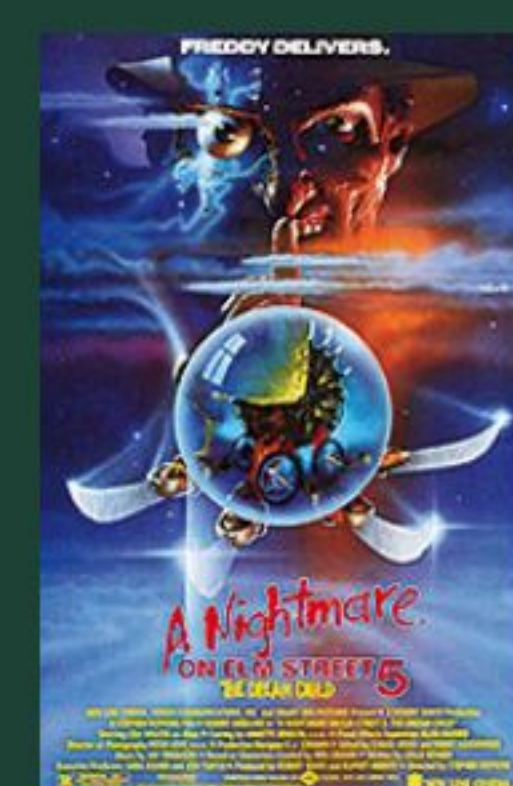
DREAM WARRIORS 1987

Killer wheelchairs, wizard masters and Freddy's mum in the Craven-scripted, hospital-themed threequel that also returned Heather Langenkamp to the mix. This time, Patricia Arquette battles Krueger in the dream world.



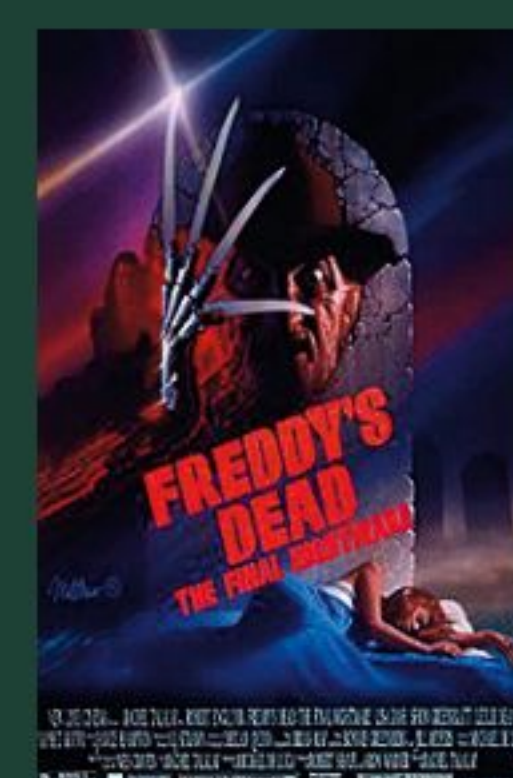
THE DREAM MASTER 1988

A fire-pissing dog returns Freddy from the dead (again). Yes, things are getting tenuous... With Arquette unable to return (she was pregnant), the acting takes a nose-dive, and then Freddy's killed off by a nursery rhyme. Snore...



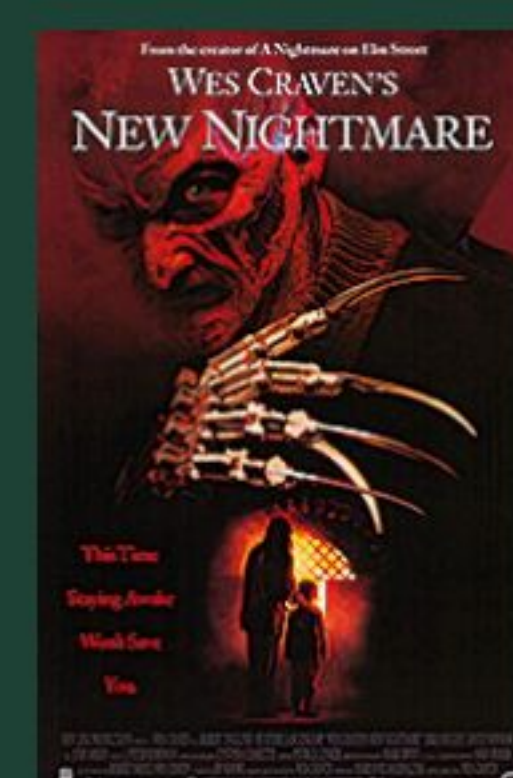
THE DREAM CHILD 1989

Freddy strays further into comedy territory while also touching on such breezy themes as abortion, drink driving and anorexia. Stephen King and Frank Miller both turned down the chance to write and direct. Can't imagine why.



FREDDY'S DEAD - THE FINAL NIGHTMARE 1991

You know a franchise is wearing thin when offspring enter the fray. This time, daddy issues abound as Krueger's daughter makes an appearance as the dream-killer seeks out his final victim.



WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE 1994

Craven, Langenkamp and co return for the definitive *Nightmare*, this one a post-modern pre-cursor to *Scream* set in the real world. It's the first sequel to actually try something new.



FREDDY VS JASON 2003

A powerless Freddy needs the help of hockey-masked machete aficionado Jason Voorhees for some reason or other in Ronny Yu's stylish but lifeless franchise smash-'em-up. More importantly, they fight at the end.



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2010

One, two, guess who? Three, four Freddy's back for more... A limp, gloomy remake, this painfully earnest rehash hits the 'reset' button with Jackie Earle Haley as Freddy Krueger. Rooney Mara has since disowned it.



AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

WORDS JOSH WINNING

IT BIRTHED A NEW GENRE – THE HORROR COMEDY – ON THE WAY TO BECOMING A ROARING SUCCESS. WE GET MOONY OVER THE LEGENDARY LYCANTHROPE PIC...

SNAP STILLS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



The law of sod dictates you must wait ages for a decent werewolf flick to arrive, only for two to come along in the same year. That year was 1981, and the lycanthropic delicacies in question were Joe Dante's *The Howling* (Dee Wallace, irreverent, bloody) and John Landis' *An American Werewolf In London* (Jenny Agutter, irreverent, bloodier). But where Dante's derisive romp served its humour with a generous helping of ham, Landis was adamant his dark beast would have bite. "My intention was not to make a comedy, and I still don't consider it a comedy, not at all," reflects the director. "It's a horror flick; it's not a happy story."

The idea for *American Werewolf* struck Landis in 1969. Working in Yugoslavia as production assistant on *Kelly's Heroes*, the 18-year-old stumbled upon a gypsy ritual in which a man was being buried upright in a deep grave, festooned in garlic to stop him rising from the dead. Ever the thinker, Landis wondered what it would be like to have to confront the undead...

From this eerie encounter, Landis drafted the story of David, a backpacker who's savaged one night by a vicious creature. The assault leaves his friend Jack dead – but not for long, as Jack's gored spirit returns to warn David that he'll probably find himself howling at the next full moon.

Though the full-blooded horror that he dreamt up was very much the stuff of nightmares, Landis didn't swerve humour entirely, splicing his treatment with comedic scenes that would become integral to the film's success. "The humour was deliberate to make it more realistic, because I was trying to think of a way to deal with the supernatural," he explains. "You're dealing with what's called suspension of disbelief. If you're making a horror film where you're dealing with serial killers – Michael Myers or *Texas Chainsaw* – that's real! People do that shit all the time! There's no such thing as werewolves."

Landis' odd little horror movie gathered dust for a decade, though, unable to bolster support. Then Landis hit the big time with *National Lampoon's Animal House* and *The Blues Brothers*. Armed with a modest \$10m budget, he finally began to crank the cogs. Studio execs suggested Dan Aykroyd for the role of David, but Landis had his eye on a relatively unknown talent for his leading man – David Naughton, the face of the Dr Pepper TV commercials. Such was Landis' belief in Naughton – whose only other notable appearance was in an episode of TV's *Planet Of The Apes* – that he didn't even ask the actor to audition.

"My agent sent me to meet with John Landis and that's really all it took," Naughton remembers. "Normally you have to go through screen tests and so on to win a role but

it was really won just by an interview. The next day he said, 'D'you want to be a werewolf?' And that was it."


Work for Naughton began almost immediately. The film's most ambitious scene would end up being its defining moment – David's graphic transformation from man to wolf. With special effects guru Rick Baker recruited to bring Landis' feverish conjurations to life, Naughton went in to have body casts taken a full five months before shooting began.

"I went along to Rick's place," says Naughton. "At the time he was working out of a garage with his group of apprentice make-up artists and big tubs of fast drying cement." Naughton had casts taken of his head, arms and legs, while the chillingly realistic puppet used for the werewolf was based on Baker's dog Bosko. "We didn't know what the hell we were doing," Baker laughs. "We were just making this stuff up as we went along!"

Baker was afforded more time to work on his gory creations thanks to *American Werewolf's* 10 week shoot which, unusually, was filmed in sequence, beginning with Wales standing in for Yorkshire. Filming took place both around London and in the Twickenham Studios, while the elaborate climax set in a chaotic Piccadilly Circus was also staged on location, with Landis' film crew remaining one of the very few permitted to work at the London tourist trap.

"I put on a free screening of *The Blues Brothers* in the Empire Leicester Square and invited 300 members of the Metropolitan police," the director reveals. "They loved it. And, whaddaya know, suddenly I had permission to shoot in Piccadilly Circus." Shooting the sequence over two nights between one and four in the morning, Landis and stunt coordinator Vic Armstrong worked the vehicular bust-ups like a military operation – so much so that the ambitious bus crash could be re-set and re-shot in mere minutes if needed.

Baker's groundbreaking special effects so astounded the Academy that they created a new awards category – Best Make-Up – just so they could reward Baker for his pioneering work.

Now, Landis' horror story is considered a staple of the genre. "People didn't know how to handle the humour aspect of it [*at the time*]," says Naughton. "John Landis' reputation was one of comedy director. People were expecting a spoof or a lighter film. This isn't a spoof guys, this is John's attempt at scaring you – and he did." 

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1981

DIRECTOR John Landis

SCREENPLAY John Landis

CAST David Naughton, Jenny Agutter, Griffin Dunne, John Woodvine

BUDGET \$10m

BOX OFFICE \$61m

RUNNING TIME 97 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Universal Pictures

TAGLINE "Beware the moon."

RELEASE DATE 21 August 1981

'MY INTENTION WAS NOT TO MAKE A COMEDY. I STILL DON'T CONSIDER IT A COMEDY, NOT AT ALL' John Landis



GREMLINS

Celebrating the moment Joe Dante spliced horror to comedy, courtesy of a mob of cackling little critters...

WORDS DAN GEARY

Well, it turned out to have the greatest preview of any movie I ever had," says Joe Dante, eyes sparking at the memory. "It was a phenomenon. And it came from out of nowhere."

Dante is in Venice, happy to reminisce with *Total Film*. The subject, of course, is 1984's witty, macabre creature feature, *Gremlins*. "All of a sudden I'm in *Time* magazine," he continues. "And then, of course, they wanted another one straight away..."

Not bad for a film that was made for \$11m, starred a bunch of horrible latex puppets and was originally dismissed as a bit of a joke by the greenlight suits at studio Warner Bros.

At that point, Dante's cachet rested on a cult werewolf movie and a cheapo aquatic schlocker. Not much, but enough to alert Steven Spielberg to his burgeoning talents. "Chris Columbus' script arrived in the mail at my seedy little Hollywood office," remembers Dante. "I thought that it had come to the wrong address, but it turned out Steven had seen both *Piranha* and *The Howling*." And he'd liked them – enough, in fact, to invite Dante to helm the first movie under his new Amblin imprint...

And so it came to pass. A horror-comedy inspired, says Columbus, by the mice rampaging in his attic at night ("To hear them skittering around in the blackness was really creepy..."), in which malevolent green monsters with teeth and claws terrorise a Capra-esque town, *Gremlins* originally had exec producer Spielberg as its only champion.

Dante sighs. "It was a movie that was extremely difficult to make because the

studio didn't really believe in it. They did it as a favour to Steven."

Yet, gradually, it moved up the slate from minor-budget side-project to major summer event (though it was released in December '84 in the UK), with Warner Bros realising *Gremlins* was the only picture it had to go up against *Ghostbusters* and *Indiana Jones*.

Naturally, that situation had its downsides. "As the visual effects budget mounted, it was clear it would have to become a studio picture," says Dante, explaining how he found himself under pressure

to deliver a picture that would fit Warner's blockbuster expectations. For starters, the homogenous execs tried to nix Phoebe Cates' famously chilling monologue about why she dreads Christmas.

"They hated that scene!" grins Dante. "They so hated it. They kept trying to get me to take it out, even after the preview. I found out later Steven was getting calls, even after the picture had opened, from





GREMLINS

Little devils: (clockwise from main) Zach Galligan and Gizmo; Gizmo isn't happy with his brothers; evil gremlin leader Stripe causes mayhem; Phoebe Cates scraps in the bar.

FROM THE
ARCHIVES
ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED
IN 2009



executives saying all we have to do is take the prints to the exchanges..."


It was Spielberg's clout that ensured it stayed in and that *Gremlins* retained its homemade charm, but this is undoubtedly Dante's film, Dante's vision... It was Dante's formative years that inform the anarchic irreverence of *Gremlins*. And just like protagonist Billy Peltzer (Zach Galligan) breaks the cardinal rules about what not to do with a Mogwai (expose it to sunlight, get it wet, feed it after midnight), Dante's monster mash smashes all directives.

Which brings us to the gremlins themselves, whose sole point is to cause as much mayhem as possible and have the most fun doing it. "A small army of puppeteers was living beneath each set, controlling rods and levers and staring into video monitors with the picture flipped," explains Dante. "The last three months of shooting was only gremlins! It really did get maddening after a while."

Gremlins came fourth in the 1984 box-office race, ultimately out-paced by Beverly Hills cops, grizzled archaeologists and four men busting ghosts. Its

legacy was soon felt in a slew of imitations, some good-ish (*Critters*) and some very bad (*Hobgoblins*).

So resoundingly successful was the film that the bewildered studios tried unsuccessfully for years to reverse-engineer its charms for the sequel factory. "They just couldn't figure out a way to do it, or even a reason to do it, because they simply didn't understand the first picture," observes Dante. "They did *Ma And Pa Kettle Meet The Gremlins*, they did *The Gremlins Go To The Moon*, *The Gremlins Go To Las Vegas*, whatever. And it was all pointless."

Eventually it dawned on Warner Bros that the best way to obtain the original's secret formula was to go back to the wellspring: Dante himself. "About five years later, they called me into the office and said, 'If you do this movie for us, we'll let you do whatever you want, I said, 'Whatever I want?' And they said, 'We don't care. Just make it so it has gremlins in it.'" And it did – loads of them... 

'Gremlins was difficult to make because the studio didn't really believe in it' JOE DANTE

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1984

DIRECTOR Joe Dante

SCREENPLAY Chris Columbus

CAST Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, Hoyt Axton, Polly Holliday, Frances Lee McCain

BUDGET \$11m

BOX OFFICE \$153m

RUNNING TIME 106 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Warner Bros

TAGLINE "Cute. Clever. Mischievous. Intelligent. Dangerous."

RELEASE DATE 8 June 1984

REWIND

80

WORDS JAMES CHRISTIE,
MATT LEYLAND, ANDY LOWEGreat Things
About The

'80s

With Rocky, Transformers, Rambo and the Turtles all reprising their pastelly glory, the 1980s were the place to be. We identify 80 genuinely ace things about the decade...

1. John Cusack

Let's hear it for the boy...

1983: prepboy-comedy *Class* debuts a babyface tucked in the corner called John Cusack – one of the few talents who embodies and transcends the decade. Having both *Sixteen Candles* and *The Sure Thing* on a CV is enough to deserve a stereo-aloft salute à la *Say Anything*, but he's also the star of the greatest '80s-revisited movie, *Grosse Pointe Blank*. Now that's class.



2. Breakdancing & Bodypopping

Born in the streetz, the dance fad of the decade separated the men from the b-boys with its arsenal of Adidas-shod full-body moves, most of which required the flexibility of an Olympic gymnast. Inspired films such as *Breakin'* and *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*.

3. Video Nasties

In its barely regulated infancy, the video industry was flooded with a cannibal holocaust of grot. Unlike '50s exploitationers, the content matched the cover art: cue media panic, new legislation and lengthy bans. Bad news, yet somehow it was a bigger kick to own an illicit copy of *The Evil Dead* than a BBFC-approved one...

4. The Fall Of The Berlin Wall

On 9 November 1989, 28 years after it was built, the most literally divisive symbol of the Cold War came tumbling down, paving the way towards German reunification. Even better, for UK schoolkids, lessons were suspended in favour of telly-watching. Peach!

5. CDs

Crackle-happy vinyl saddoes kvetched the sound was too 'clinical', but their day was done. Come mid-decade, the shiny five-incher had revolutionised record collections. Oh, the convenience of not having to flip an album halfway through! The brain-boggling 'laser' technology! Although LP sleeves made good comedy hats....

6. The Empire Strikes Back (1980)

Oh, father...

Fab invention and all, the internet... but think how it might have spoiled the daddy of all '80s movie revelations. Or sucked the fun out of three years of pre-*Jedi* fan speculation. As it was, Darth's dark secret left a generation of sci-philes thunderstruck – a formative experience we wouldn't swap for all the knob-enlargement e-spam in the world...

REWIND

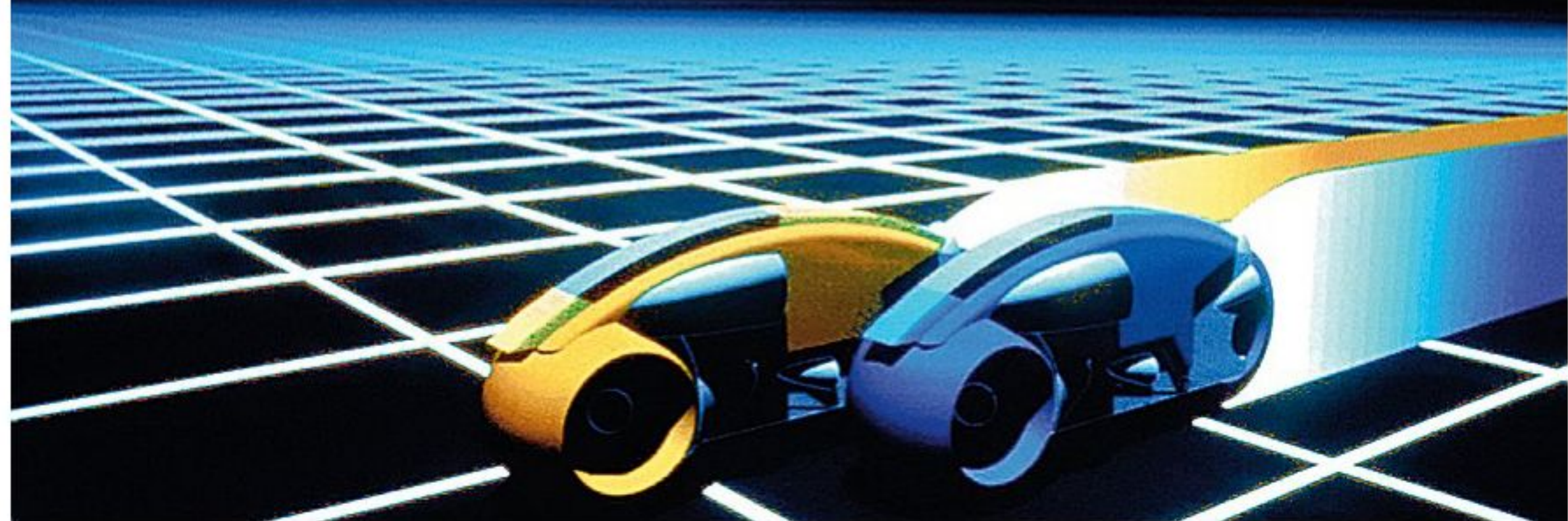
7. Mr T

Fool-pitying, Stallone-clobbering, bling-encrusted brick shithouse who became a playground icon as the Peppard-upstaging star of *The A-Team*, most bloodlessly violent TV show ever created. Rec-kon.



8. Amusement Arcades

Dimly-lit dens of joy which, for a few 10p pieces, offered gratification beyond anything home consoles of the time could match. Fetishised in Disney's CGI-spangled vidkid epic *Tron*.



9. Sword & Sorcery Movies

Conan The Barbarian, *The Beastmaster*, *Hawk The Slayer*... Fantasy flicks in those days may not have had brains, but they sure had brawn.



11. E.T. (1982)

When droves cry...

For scores of '80s kids, Spielberg's telescope-necked Christ allegory was the first time they sobbed in the cinema. And we're not talking a few fell-off-my-BMX sniffles. This was a popcorn-bucket-filling flood; the yardstick by which all subsequent emotional traumas (first break-up, leaving home) would be measured.



10. Toys & Games

Let the masses play...

Trivial Pursuit

Reward your knowledge of presidents' middle names with little coloured cheeses.

Masters Of The Universe

Steroidal boys' toys franchised into cartoons, comics and Dolph Lundgren cinema duds.

Buckaroo

Pin the bucket/shovel/dynamite on the donkey suspense. As seen in *This Is England*.

Operation

The PG way for '80s kids to play *Doctors And Nurses*.

Speak & Spell

Robo-voiced literary-booster, adaptable as mobile phone for homesick aliens.

Rubik's Cube

Multi-coloured instrument of torture currently lining lofts the world over.

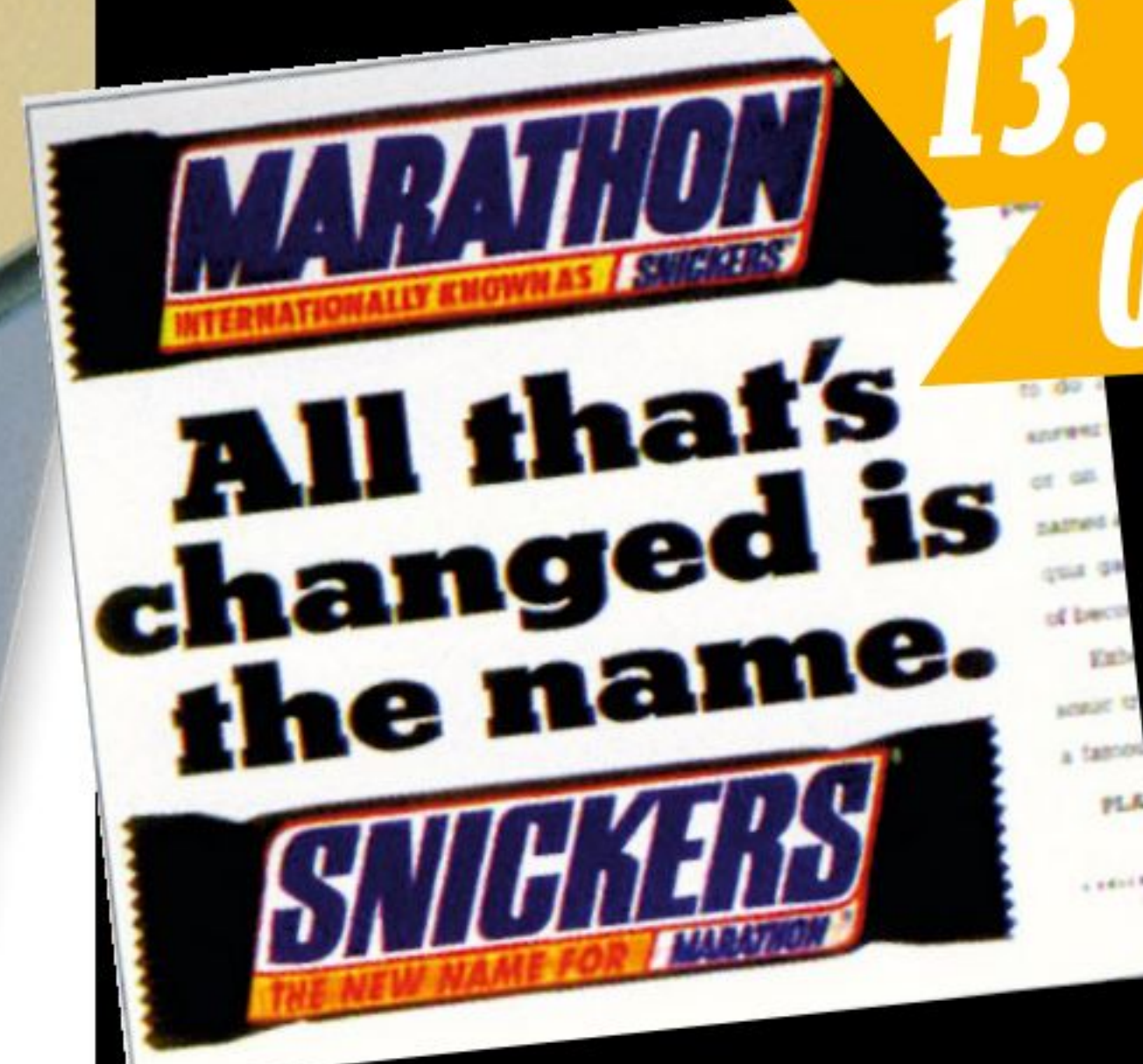


12. Paris, Texas (1984)

Heartbreak, alienation, the open road... edging out *Wings Of Desire*, this is Wim Wenders' quintessential existential classic, with a career-best turn from one of the faces of the decade, Nastassja Kinski.



13. Sweets, Before Global Branding



'Snickers' was 'Marathon' – which, without the invitation to laugh at a bar of chocolate, was clearly better. And 'Opal Fruits' was way more exotic than the ultra-camp 'Starburst'.

14. Moonlighting

Postmodernism went prime-time with this self-referential screwball detective show that launched Bruce Willis' career and rebooted Cybill Shepherd's. Slick, sophisticated and delightfully silly.





15. Sly, Arnie & Bruce

Wildboys...

"I'd be angry at hearing my name mentioned in the same breath as Stallone's," rumbled Arnie in 1985, the year Sly's career peaked (the *Rambo/Rocky IV* double-whammy) and his entered its prime (*Commando*). They later patched things up to form Planet Hollywood with pal Bruce Willis, whose only '80s actioner – *Die Hard* – was mould-breaking enough to propel him past claggy also-rans like Chuck Norris and Jean-Claude Van Damme.

16. Betty Blue (1986)

Red, red wine...

Finally, a dirty little late-night Channel 4 French secret writhing across the screen of the local Odeon. Diva director Jean Jacques Beineix had us at bonjour, with a notorious opening scene of needful humping ("I'd known Betty for only a week. The forecast was for storms..."). The high-maintenance, titular tit-flasher was played by feral ex-model Béatrice Dalle, whose unscratchable itch for nose-candy later blew a potential second-coming gig as Bruce Willis' missus in *The Sixth Sense*.



17. VHS vs Betamax



The original home-ent format war was a victory for quantity over quality, JVC's longer-running VHS definitely whupping Sony's technically superior Betamax. Sony had the last laugh with Blu-ray, though...

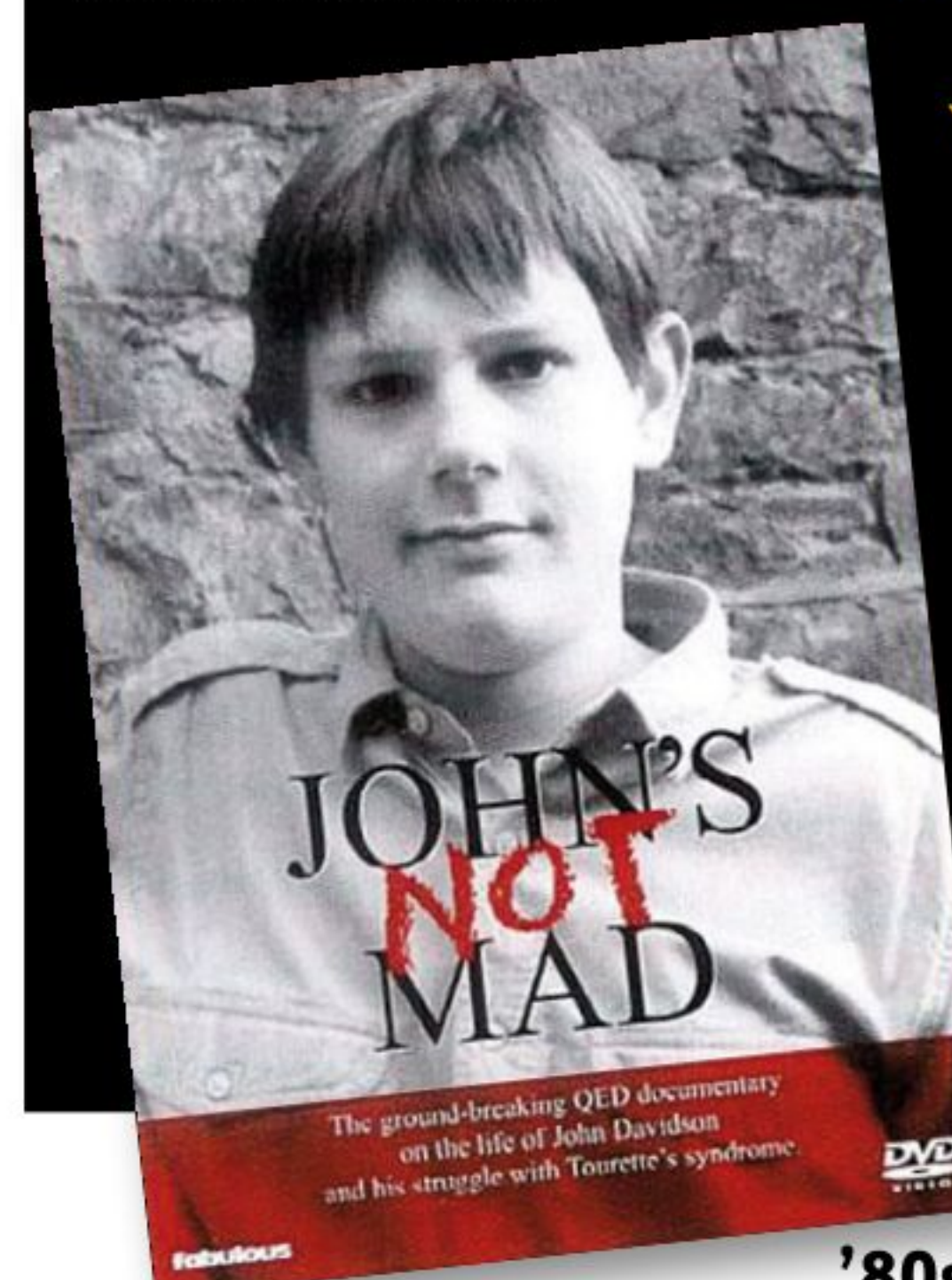
18. Fanny And Alexander (1982)

Ingmar Bergman capped the cinematic leg of his career on a high in every sense with this atypically optimistic family saga. Witnessed through the eyes of a child, it's the work of a fully matured master. Peerless.



19. John's Not Mad (1986)

Staggering, Tourette's-exploring QED doc co-opted as cult comedy by a generation of naughty school-children thrilled by supermarket swearing ("Mum, ya cunt!")





20. *Lethal Weapon* (1987)

Ebony & Ivory...

The buddy flick that gave the action genre a fresh load of ammo...

It was the blockbuster that wasn't supposed to be. Released out of season and with little fanfare, *Lethal Weapon* was a tribute to the low-budget cop dramas of the '70s that spawned a billion-dollar series and became the template for a generation of action movies.

"In most of the material that was around at the time the violence and the action was fairly gratuitous," recalls director Richard Donner. "But [screenwriter] Shane Black had written this brilliant script where the characters gave everything a reason to be. The challenge is to make the characters work, so that the audience really cares if they come through."

The characters in question were Roger Murtaugh and Martin Riggs: an ageing detective close to retirement and a borderline psychotic seemingly determined to

execute a death wish. "When they sent me the script I'd been herding calves and fixing fences for a year," says Mel Gibson. "I thought it had real possibilities. Not only was it a good actioner, there was something different about it. The main character was so flawed."

It was casting director Marion Dougherty who proposed Danny Glover for the role of Roger Murtaugh. "But the character's not black!" responded Donner. After a pause, he experienced a personal epiphany. "I realised what a bigoted, narrow-minded person I was," he confesses. "I felt really stupid. The moment changed my life."

Yet while *Lethal Weapon* was conceived on the Riggs/Murtaugh partnership, it was the alchemy between Donner and Gibson that provided the recipe for its success. Says Brian Jamieson, who worked in distribution at Warner Bros, "Dick and Mel really clicked. They both saw in each other a certain strength which they drew upon."





21. Aliens (1986)

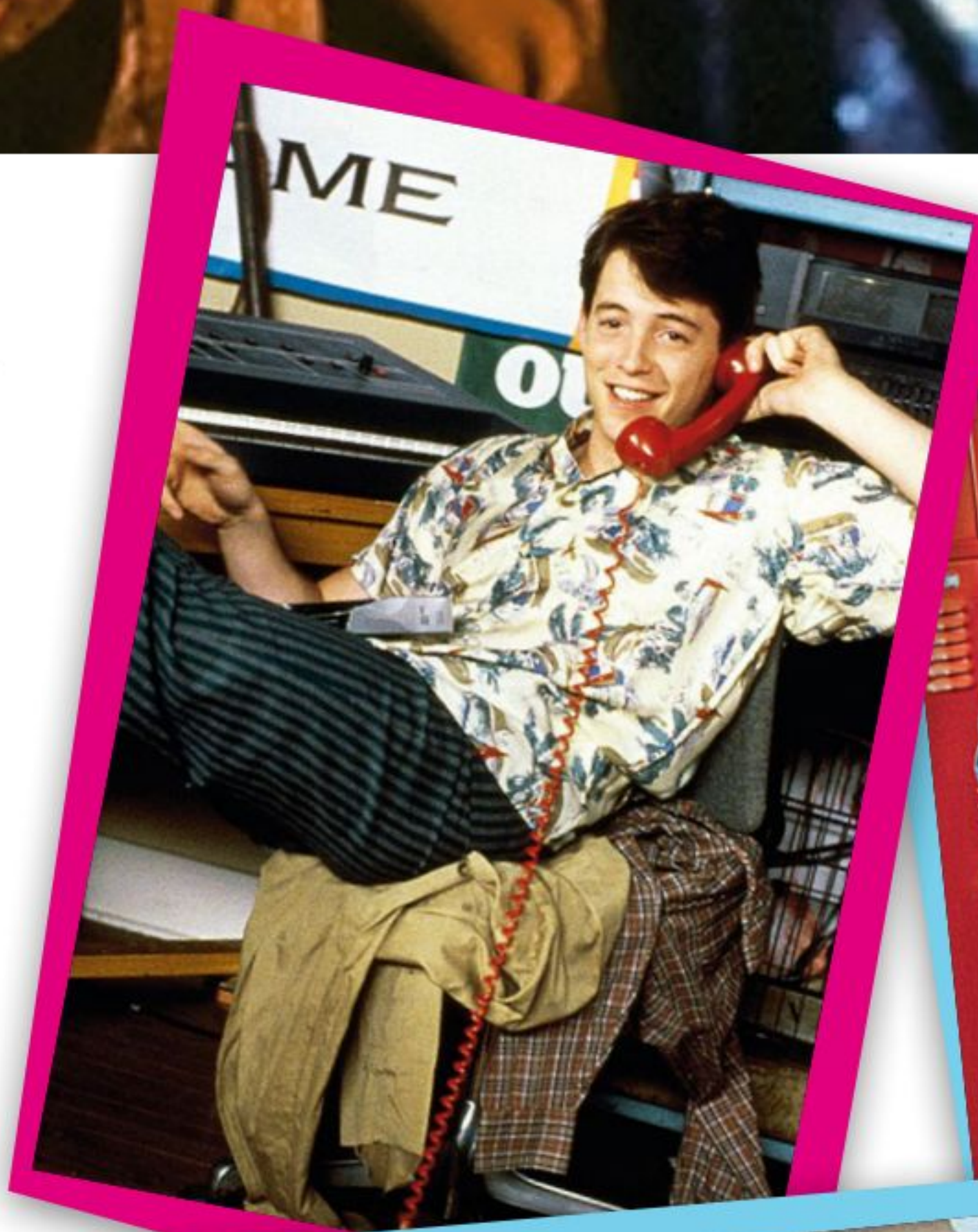
Girls just wanna have guns...

From *Staying Alive* to *Superman IV*, '80s sequels often sucked like the podium woman in *Police Academy*. But there were one or two mighty exceptions... Six years after *Empire Strikes Back* came another storming follow-up to a late-'70s sci-fi classic. With the title monster no longer a mystery, James Cameron tipped the cold-sweat terror of the original into hot-muzzle warmaggedon. The gung-ho militarism is very post-Rambo (which was co-penned by Cameron), but given a feminist slant by Sigourney Weaver's portrayal of matriarchal might. She's a queen-killer...



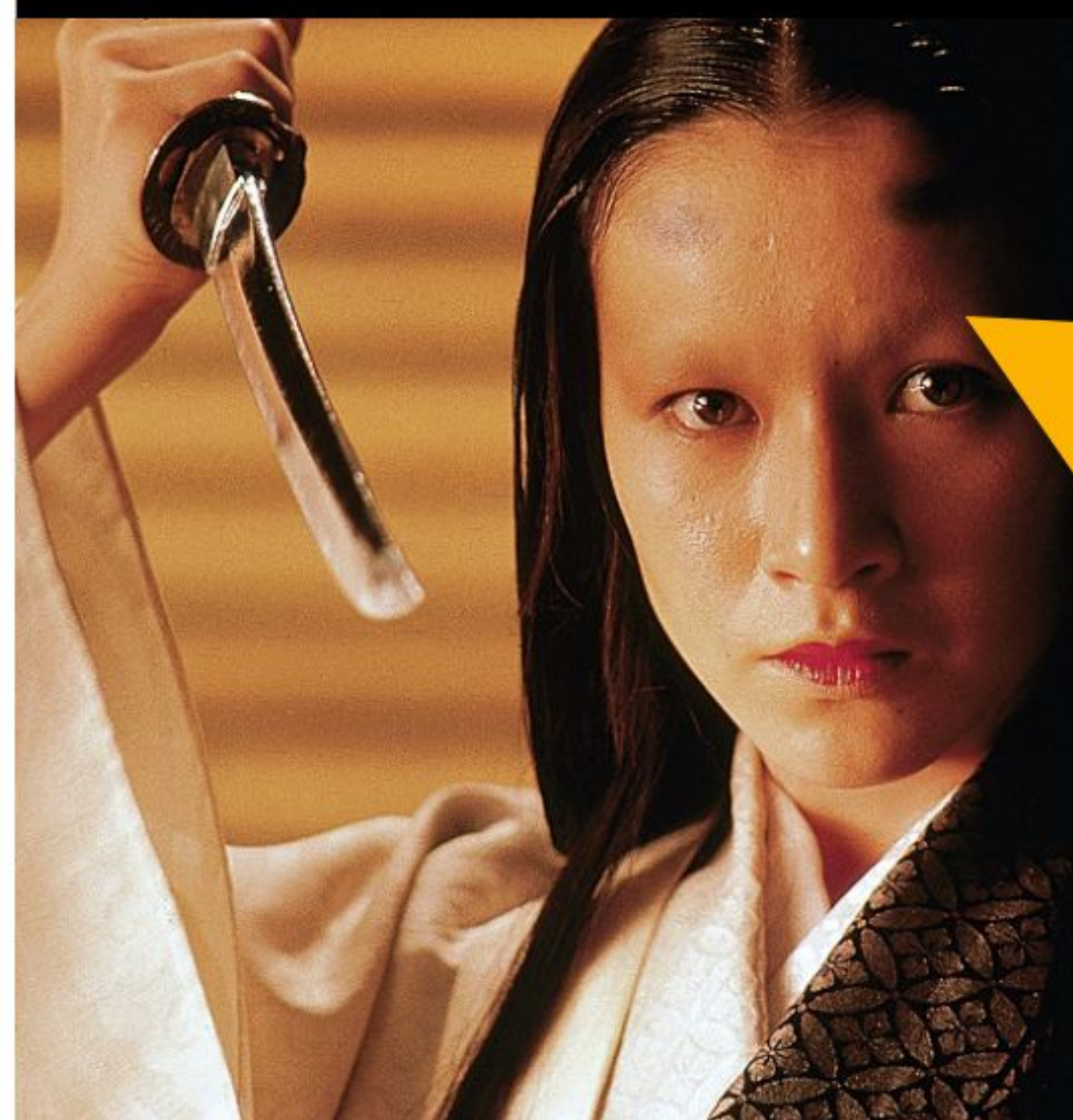
23. Aussie Soaps

A welcome respite from the miserablism of Brit soaps, *Neighbours* and *Home & Away* took us to a world of sun, where 75 per cent of the cast were way more shaggable than the corresponding 5 per cent of Albert Square.



23. Calculator Watches

Told the time *and* allowed you to cheat in maths. Thanks to Ryan Gosling in *Half Nelson*, it made a kitschy comeback...



24. Ran (1985)

Aged 75, Akira Kurosawa mounted one of the true masterpieces of his – or anyone's – career with this sumptuous adaptation of King Lear. Savage, delicate, glorious.



25. High School Movies

Kids in America...

The '80s teen-flick came in two flavours: John Hughes angst-fest (*Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*) and tit-centric smut-com (*Porky's*, *Screwballs*, etc). The innocence of both was shredded at decade's end by a bitch of a black comedy named *Heathers*.



REWIND



26. Rob Reiner

Against all odds...
...he could do no wrong, masterfully hopping genres and moods to produce a string of deft, back-to-back classics (*This Is Spinal Tap*, *The Sure Thing*, *Stand By Me*, *The Princess Bride*, *When Harry Met Sally...*). His secret? "Ah, who knows? A lot of luck and hopefully a little talent! There's no magic formula." As later clunkers *North*, *The Story Of Us* and *Alex & Emma* went on to prove...



27. The Birth Of Hip-Hop

Something of a phenomenon...

Okay, so Sugar Hill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' (with its debut "hip hop" name-check) was 1979, but while Brits moped to Japan and Visage, '80s New York was busy with an electro/disco/funk mesh that would re-plot the musical

map. 'MC's talking over records became rap; 'scratching' vinyl kicked off DJ culture... Still, today's bling-and-brag swagger is a far cry from the punkish instinct that anyone with a double-deck and mic could make music. Check out ace doc *Style Wars* for the full story.



28. The Shining (1980)

Kubrick reinvents King in the first great scare flick of the decade. Was there ever a more sinister shot of a moppet squeaking?



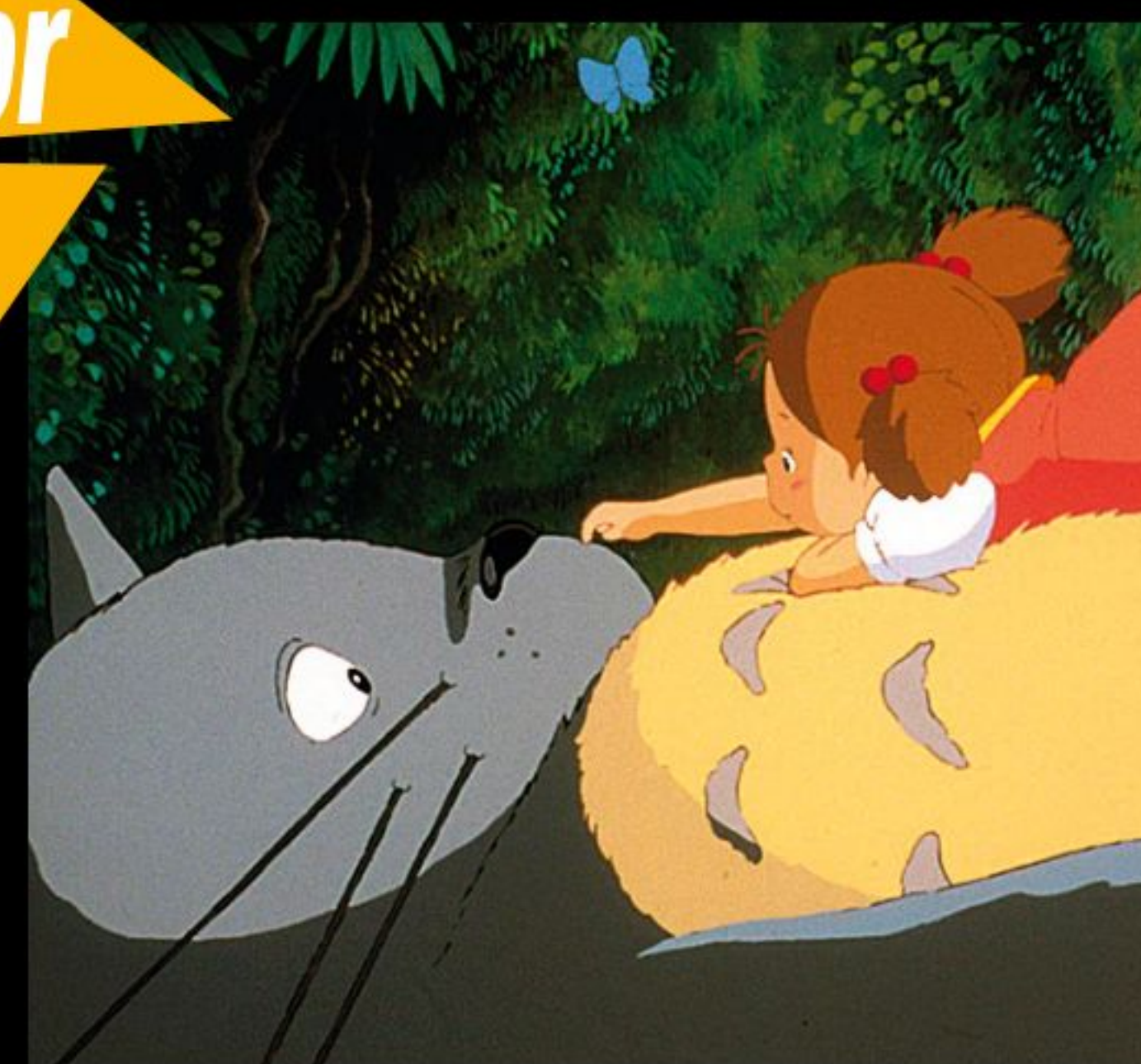
29. Dry Ice

From the climax of *Ghostbusters* to anything by Joel Schumacher, nothing lent 'atmos' to an '80s movie like a billowing blanket of frozen carbon dioxide.



30. My Neighbor Totoro (1988)

Hayao Miyazaki was conjuring animated magic long before *Spirited Away*. Take this exquisite tale of two sisters. Smarter and more enchanting than any of Disney or Don Bluth's '80s output.



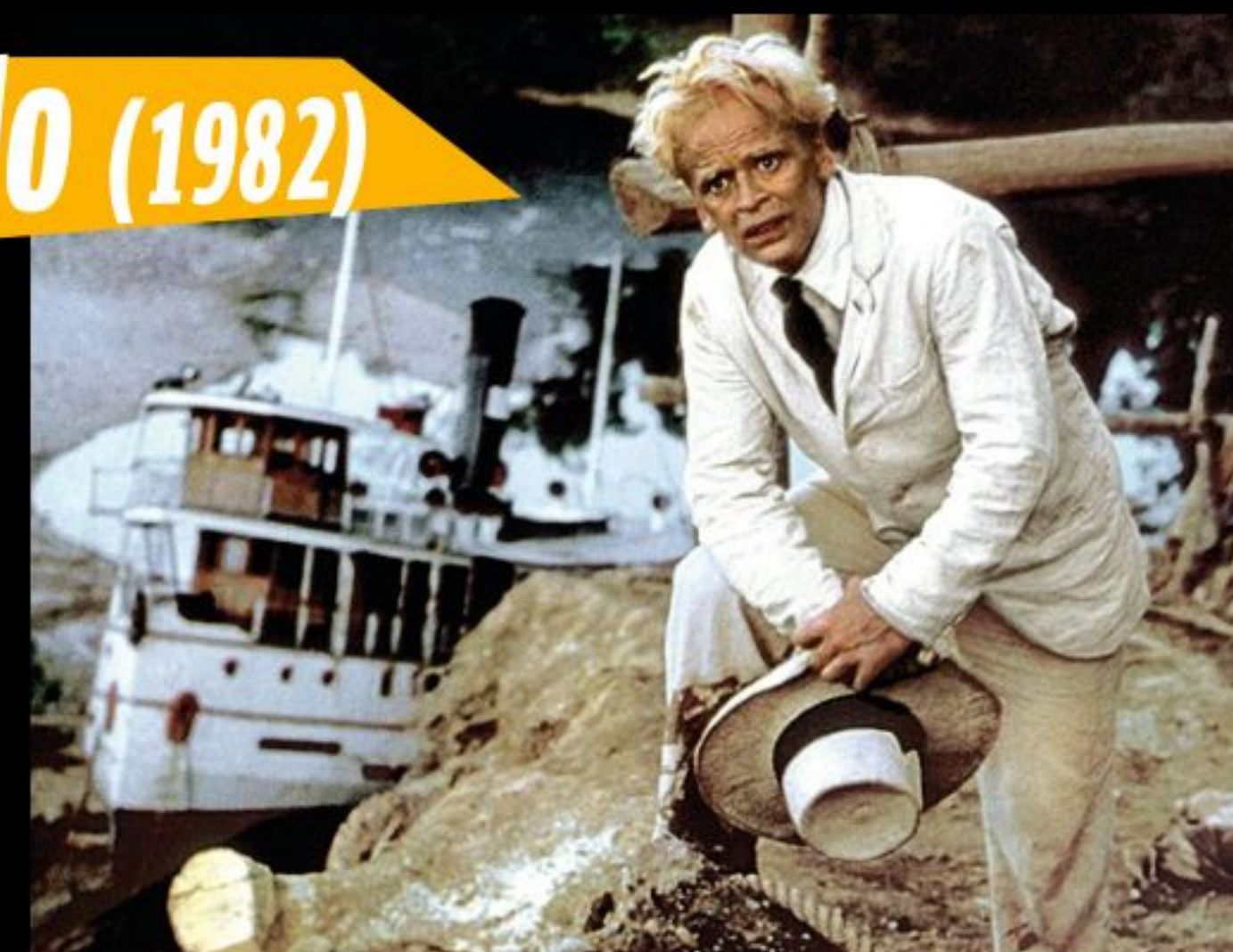
31. The Sony Walkman

Not only did yesteryear's iPod seismically alter our personal listening habits, it inspired Cliff Richard to record his least embarrassing hit, 'Wired For Sound'.



32. Fitzcarraldo (1982)

In an era where the synthetic often held sway, Werner Herzog kept it real by hoisting a steamboat over a mountain for his jungle vision-quest. Barking.



33. Spitting Image

A sorely missed highlight of Sunday-evening telly, Fluck and Law's latex lampoonery wielded more influence than the politicians it skewered. And the Chicken Song is still ace.





34. MTV

I want my... I want my...
Beardy purists will define 1 August 1981 as the day the music died – and the image took over. But MTV's launch changed music and movies. Video didn't kill the radio star. It just fuzzed the pop/film star boundary. As musos won record-buyers with mini-movies, so filmmakers told editors to jump and twitch and cut more often to appeal to viewers weaned on the three-minute fix. "We're the MTV generation!" protested Bart and Lisa Simpson. "We feel neither highs or lows." "What's that like?" asked Homer. Shrug.

35. Top Gun (1986)

This gives me a hard-on...
Don Simpson called it "Star Wars on Earth". Tony Scott opted for "Apocalypse Now on an aircraft carrier". *Top Gun* is the ultimate '80s actioner, its sky-high concept pinned to Cruise's soaring grin, Jeffrey Kimball's va-va-voom visuals and Harold Faltermeyer's rocketing synth score. Everything you need to know about '80s cinema in 110 terrifically tacky minutes.



36. Robocop

"RoboCop was my reaction to being thrown into American society and looking around with wide eyes, thinking, 'This is crazy,'" says director Paul Verhoeven. And what crazy his film is, full of subversive laughs (murderous corporate rivalries, board game 'Nuke 'Em') and a heck of an iconic hero.



The Eight Best Music Videos Of The '80s



MICHAEL JACKSON – THRILLER (1984)
The eight-minute zombie-flick homage.



DURAN DURAN – GIRLS ON FILM (1981)
Big-haired '80s ladies strip off and mud-wrestle.



A-HA – TAKE ON ME (1985)
Gal swoons over a comic featuring lead singer Morten.



PETER GABRIEL – SLEDGEHAMMER (1986)
Mind-melting stop-motion that won nine MTV awards.



ROBERT PALMER – ADDICTED TO LOVE (1985)
Bob croons with band of mini-skirted minxes.



DIRE STRAITS – MONEY FOR NOTHING (1985)
Debut vid with then-groundbreaking CGI.



MADONNA – LIKE A PRAYER (1989)
Burning crosses forced sponsors Pepsi to ditch Madge.

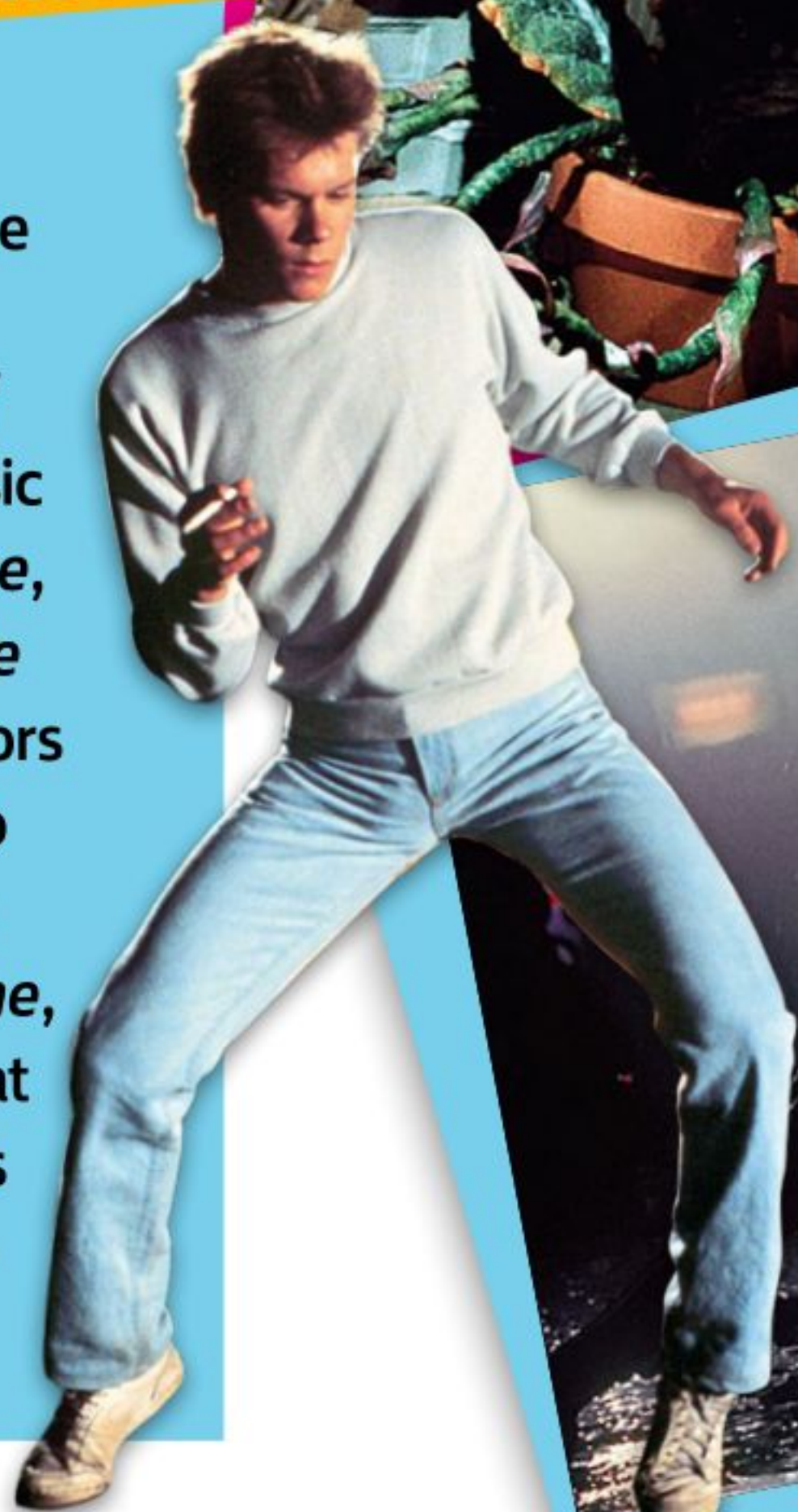


AEROSMITH/RUN DMC – WALK THIS WAY (1986)
Rock and rap collide through smashed-up walls.

REWIND

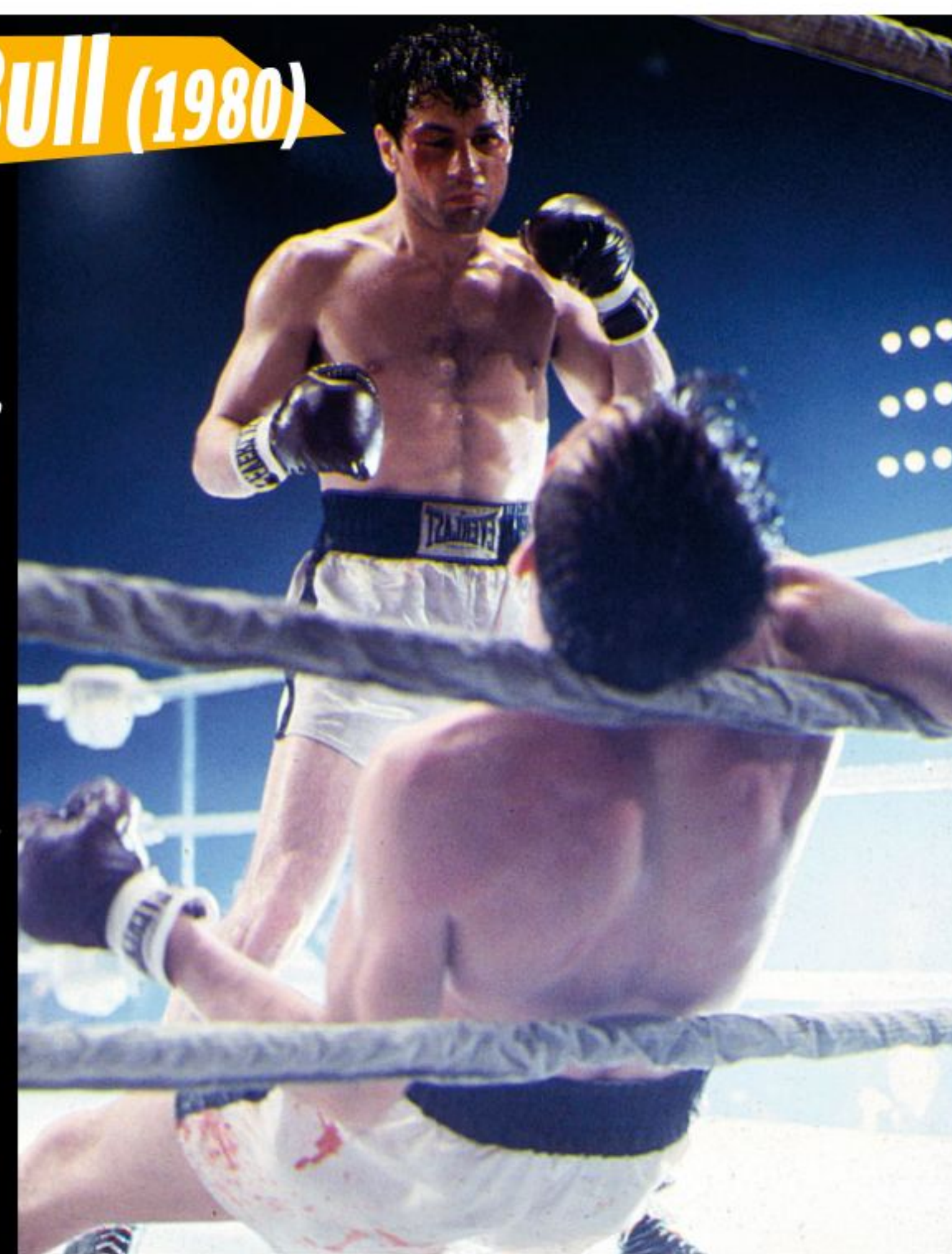
37. Music Movies

Off with the tap shoes, on with the leg-warmers for the new breed of street-savvy music flicks (*Flashdance*, *Footloose*, *Purple Rain*), where actors were less likely to burst into song... unless it was *Fame*, the sensation that presaged today's 'celeb' fast-track Cowell-culture.



38. Raging Bull (1980)

Some saw it as a last hurrah for the New Hollywood renaissance, but for Scorsese it was an artistic rebirth after the perceived failure of *New York, New York*. Backslaps to De Niro not only for his Oscar-winning turn as champ/chump Jake La Motta, but for persuading Marty not to squander his '70s promise in a pile of coke.



39. The Man With Two Brains (1983)

Back before he took to the schmaltz-sauce, Steve Martin's funny bones were unbreakable. He hit a peak with this uproariously idiotic scattershot of skits masquerading as schlock horror parody – with the finest finger-sucking scene in cinema history.



40. The Cold War

The big weapon willy-waving of the 'superpowers' hung over the decade like an apocalyptic sulk, but filmmakers bunkered down and made the best of it. Matthew Broderick's *WarGames* gave mutually assured destruction a cosy Hollywood face, while *Kes* writer Barry Hines rammed home a jolt of British hyperrealism with *Threads*.



41. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

You gotta fight... Irradiated, pizza-necking peace-increasers who spoke like surf bums and carried more weapons than you'll find in an East End boozer on a Friday night. The turtles have since crawled their way from underground comics to a new live-action movie via an earlier series of movies and a shouty, late-'80s cartoon that had its title neutered from 'Ninja' to 'Hero' in the UK.



42. Highlander (1986)

The one and only... It shouldn't have worked, it couldn't have worked... an actor raised in Geneva, his English appalling, playing an immortal Scotsman mentored by Sean Connery's Spanish duke... with music by Queen. But who didn't want to cross swords with Christopher Lambert's wibble-warble warrior ("You talk funny Nash. Where you from?"). Forget the laughable sequels: there can be only one.



43. Horror Directors

Back then, you weren't anyone in horror unless your name was on the C-list: Craven, Cronenberg, Cunningham (Sean, of *Friday The 13th* fame) and, of course, Carpenter.

44. *Come And See* (1983)

One of the decade's lost classics until its long-overdue DVD debut, Elem Klimov's Belarussian epic plunges you deep into the harrowing heart of World War II. Scarring.



45. Massive Mobile Phones

Brick-thick, cement-block heavy and with an antenna like Terry Wogan's Blankety Blank mic, yesterday's mobile phone epitomised the era of big... and greed (see *Wall Street*) being good. Mostly used by yuppies.



46. Very '80s Stars

KATHLEEN TURNER

THEN Stone-romancing, Jessica Rabbit-larynxing sex goddess.

NOW Divides time between stage, TV and voicing demon domiciles (*Monster House*).

ANDREW MCCARTHY

THEN Mannequin-nutting heartthrob-cum-Mob-dodging corpse-concealer.

NOW Works mainly in telemovies and serial drama (*Orange Is The New Black*).

DEBRA WINGER

THEN Froggy-voiced firebrand with 'difficult' reputation.

NOW Quit acting, then returned, earning 2005 Emmy nod for tele-drama *Dawn Anna*.

STEVE GUTTENBERG

THEN Curly-haired smirker plying impish trade in cop, baby and old biddy franchises.

NOW Had recurring role as rich suit in second series of *Veronica Mars*.

MOLLY RINGWALD

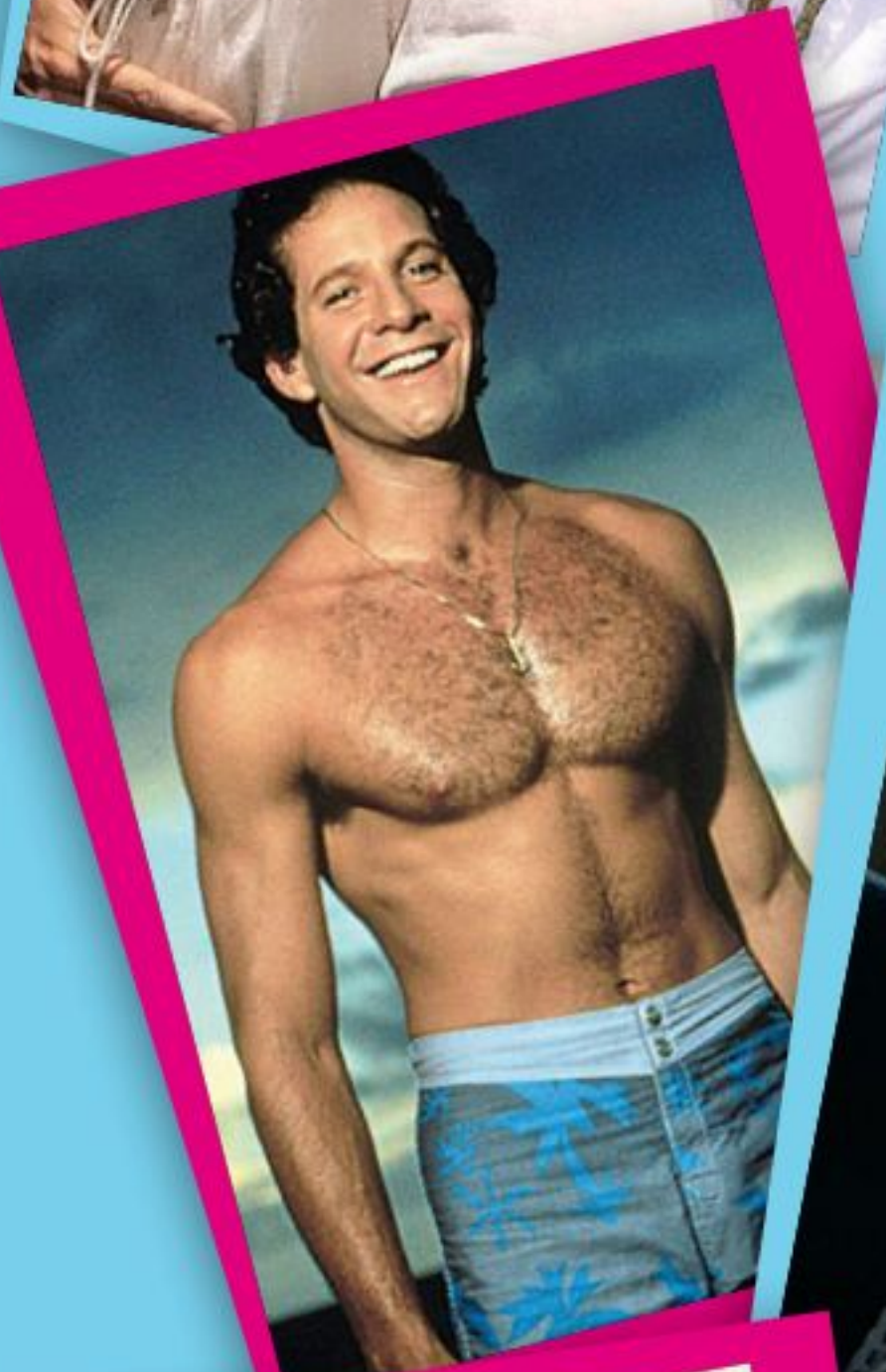
THEN Flame-haired Brat Pack princess at top of John Hughes' casting list.

NOW Favours stage over screen, starring in productions of *Cabaret* and *Sweet Charity*.

COREY FELDMAN

THEN Former child thesp noted for fantasy roles (*Gremlins*, *The Lost Boys*).

NOW Hosting show *Corey's Angels Talk Live*.

48. *The King Of Comedy* (1982)

Inexplicably overlooked at the time, Scorsese's startlingly prescient dissection of wannabe culture today easily justifies a spot next to his other De Niro hook-ups.



49. PG-13 & 12 Certificates

Changing times called for new certs: uproar over *Temple Of Doom's* heart-ripping larks ushered in the US PG-13, while in Blighty the comic-book gloom of *Batman* prompted the 12.

50. *A Fish Called Wanda* (1988)

Not the best of decades for British comedy (*The Boys In Blue*, anyone?), but at least we had this sublime screwball swansong from 78-year-old Ealing veteran Charles Crichton.

47. *Scarface* (1983)

Oliver Stone's rewrite of Howard Hawks' 1932 original gangster classic was mangled by critics for its simplistic sociology. But over time, Pacino's swearsy, strutting, rutting turn as Cuban refugee-turned-coke baron Tony Montana has grown into a guilty pleasure of the greed age. The imagery was cheerfully reclaimed by late '80s hip-hoppers who saw Tony's skewed journey from belittled outsider to American Dreamweaver as the ultimate cinematic riff on ghetto escape.



51. Transformers

Turning Japanese...

Pop quiz: what links Orson Welles, *Boogie Nights* and Michael Bay? A warring band of alien robot contortionists, that's what. Just as the Autobots and Decepticons were able to shape-shift into all manner of earthly forms (articulated lorry; giant gun; um, cassette tape), so the franchise metamorphosed from a line of easily breakable yet beloved toys into a cartoon, comic series and 1986 movie (featuring Mr Welles' booming vocals and the song 'Touch', later memorably covered by Dirk Diggler). Two decades on, the dreams of every Look-In reader are made live-action by Michael Bay's series of humungous blockbuster adapts. Roll out!



52. Synthesisers

The keyboard wizard was king of the '80s soundtrack: Harold Faltermeyer (*Beverly Hills Cop*), Giorgio Moroder (*Scarface*) and especially Vangelis, whose *Chariots Of Fire* synth-scapes remain more memorable than the flick itself.



53. Withnail & I (1987)

Wanda's main competition for Best '80s Brit-com, with zippy, swearsy dialogue that can still be heard ricocheting off the walls of student bedsits.



54. Body-Swap Films

Who knows why, but for a while it was all the rage to suddenly grow up (genre benchmark *Big*), grow down (*18 Again*) or, most disturbingly, find yourself suddenly transported into the body of Judge Reinhold (*Vice Versa*).



55. Once Upon A Time In America (1984)

Sergio Leone's last, long-nurtured film suffered studio molestation but, when restored to full glory, emerged as the best Mob movie made between *The Godfather II* and *GoodFellas*.



56. Home Computers

The first computers changed the face of technology. Did they alter the way we worked, schooled, made love? No. They allowed us to play 48 hours of *Football Manager*.



57. Trading Places (1983)

Raucous farce from John Landis. Dan Aykroyd gets poor, Eddie Murphy gets rich and Jamie Lee Curtis gets 'em out – surely the moment many VCR owners discovered the 'freeze-frame' button.



58. *The Goonies* (1985)



Going Underground...

A seminal chunk of kid-movie history...

Once upon a time, kids in movies could be counted on to spout gran-friendly dialogue like, "Oh, Mary Poppins!" or "God bless us, everyone!" Then the '80s happened. Genial bundles of British cuteness were replaced by cooler-than-Slush-Puppy American teens who yelled "Penis breath!" We loved it, of course, for those Yankee toe-rags spoke the real language of kids – a thousand times dirtier than grown-ups could ever imagine.

Authenticity was integral to the success of *The Goonies*, Richard Donner's tale of pint-sized pals in search of buried booty. Wanting his charges to behave before the camera as they might in real life, the director invited his cast to improvise. "The script was well written," Donner recalls. "But if they had an idea that they thought they could do more with than what we had on paper, I encouraged them to run with it."

"When you read a script, there's always one line at a time per character," adds Ke Huy Quan, who played Data. "But we were kids fighting for screen time and even when we didn't have lines we would speak over one another! Dick let us do it and that's why he's such a great filmmaker. He realised that's what kids do."

Grossing \$61m in the US, it was a hit but not a sensation, which put paid to a projected string of

sequels. But so much has the film's popularity grown over the years that even now sequel talk continues, and *Goonies* continues to lasso young imagination; its spirit of adventure is as relevant today as during the MTV generation. "*The Goonies* has become a kids' classic," believes Jeff Cohen ('Chunk'), "The movie is, fundamentally, about kids just being kids..."



REWIND

59. Miami Vice & Michael Mann

Pastel jacket required...

So what if 20 minutes of every episode consisted of driving around to Phil Collins? *Miami Vice* was must-see TV, its socklessly stubbled fashions imitated in wine bars across the land. For style and substance, exec producer Michael Mann also gave us *Crime Story* – less of a ratings-winner than *Vice*, but a boys-in-blueprint for modern shows like *The Wire*.

60. Midnight Run (1988)

After all that heavy lifting for Scorsese, De Niro did his lightest work since the De Palma days – the result was one of the decade's most entertaining and overlooked swear-'em-ups.

61. The Young Ones

Surreal, snot-filled student sick-com that heralded the rise of 'alternative' humour and hosted some of the era's top bands, including Motörhead's doing 'Ace Of Spades'.

62. Gremlins (1984)

Joe Dante's finest hour. The playground video-copyists cashed in when microwaved monsters and chainsaw slapstick landed the film a spoilsport 15 rating...

63. Back To The Future (1985)

Time after time...

1985's top grosser references many a passing fad (Pepsi Free! Huey Lewis! Umm, terrorism!) but remains timeless thanks to a screenplay tighter than one of Olivia Newton-John's headbands. And, given the Reagan/Thatcher 'family-values' ethos of the era, there was something superbly subversive about having the leading lady fall for her own son.



64. Yuppies

Living in a material world...

Young, upwardly mobile and very, very annoying, the yuppie nonetheless provided fresh meat for movie-makers, whether they were crafting modern morality plays featuring Michael Douglas



(*Wall Street*, *Fatal Attraction*), or Michael J Fox vehicles exploring the upside (*The Secret Of My Success*) and downside (*Bright Lights, Big City*) of Me-decade careerism.

65. Kevin Costner

Prince Charming...

True, he busted bigger blocks in the '90s (*Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*, *The Bodyguard*), but it's '80s Kev we remember most fondly: playing baseball (*Bull Durham*), enabling baseball (*Field Of Dreams*), rogering Sean Young in the back of a limo (*No Way Out*)... Plus he's the answer to a classic '80s trivia question: which actor played the corpse in *The Big Chill*?



66. An American Werewolf In London (1981)

What Spielberg did for sharks, Landis did for lycanthropes – mint a template no one's surpassed since. Rick Baker's FX look more painful and hair-raising than ever in our age of weightless CGI.



67. Sundance & Soderbergh



High-concept movie-making may have dominated '80s Hollywood, but the indie revolution was on its way – the Sundance Film Festival was born and coughed up Steven Soderbergh's debut *sex, lies and videotape*.

68. Ghostbusters (1984)

Saturday Night Live meets *The Exorcist*, with box-office-rocking results. Only "Greed is good!" and "Heeere's Johnny!" rival "Who you gonna call?" as the '80s-movie catchphrase.



69. Max Headroom



Short-lived but ubiquitous 'virtual host' (actually a mix of prosthetics, video cut-up and Matt Frewer) who parlayed the world's most famous stammer into a multi-media career ranging from Coke ads to Art Of Noise records.

70. Raiders Of The Lost Ark (1981)

The film which made a global superstar of Harrison Ford and provided exactly the nostalgic escapism everyone craved at the crest of Cold War nuclear chills.



71. The Sinclair C5

The De Lorean combined bankruptcy with pop-cult iconhood in *Back To The Future*, but there was no Hollywood ending for C5 inventor Clive Sinclair – apart from his three-wheeled folly giving everyone a good laugh.



REWIND

72. The Second Wave Of 'Nam Movies

"Do we get to win this time?" uggled Rambo as Hollywood embarked on another tour of duty in South-East Asia. The answer was a resounding "No!" from such anti-heroic, psychologically tortured films as *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Casualties Of War* and *Born On The Fourth Of July*.



73. Spoof Movies

If the noughties marked the nadir of the cine-spoof (*Date Movie*, *Epic Movie*), then the '80s were its apex, taking off with *Airplane!* and *Top Secret!* and going out with a bang with *The Naked Gun*, the last a triumphant vindication of cancelled TV classic *Police Squad!*



74. Blade Runner (1982)

If you wanted to know what this 'postmodernism' lark was all about in the '80s, you could either bog down in books filled with fancy-schmancy words like 'bricolage' and 'simulacra', or you could watch *Blade Runner*. Everything you need to know, plus Daryl Hannah in a fright wig.



75. Woody Allen's Mia Farrow Phase

The '70s were the Diane Keaton years, but through the '80s, Allen only had a Woody for Mia, whether as sensitive centre (*The Purple Rose Of Cairo*) or sterling support (*Crime And Misdemeanors*). She recently mused: "That was a really wonderful run of films..."

76. Charity Records

Calling Planet Earth...

Charity began in the recording studio in the '80s, barely a week going by without another group of musicians jostling round a mic to solicit cash for disaster victims. With its stark lyric ("Tonight thank God it's them instead of you"), Band Aid set a standard no one else could match: the more self-congratulatory "We Are The World" remains notable for Springsteen sounding like he's giving birth to a rhinoceros.



77. Illustrious Debutants

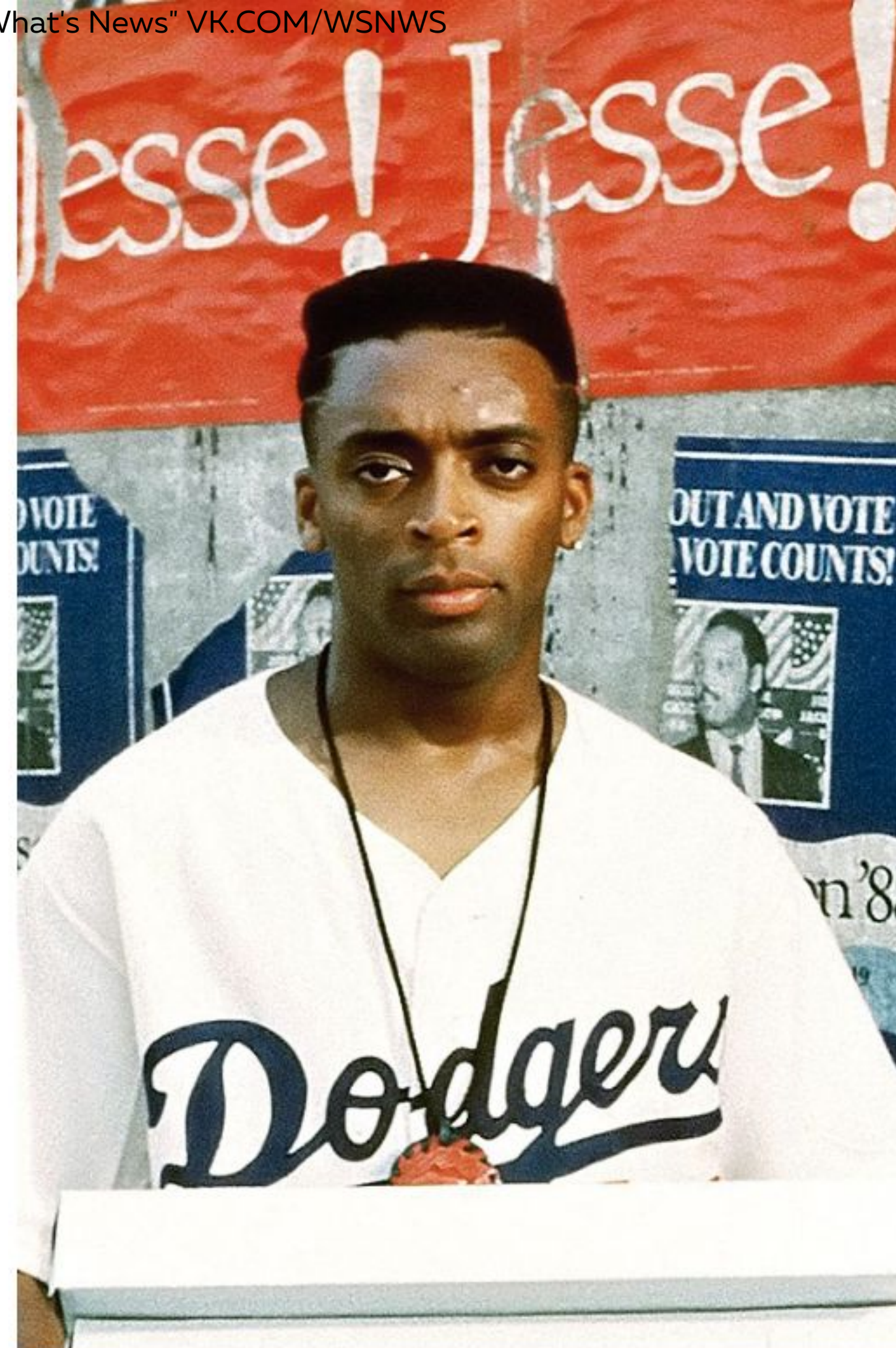
Young guns go for it...

The '80s may have given us Roland Rat (again, see *This Is England*), but they also spawned a fresh new wave of acting talent who evolved into today's Hollywood royalty: Tom Cruise, Sean Penn, John Cusack, Forest Whitaker, Nicolas Cage, Julia Roberts, Eddie Murphy, Kiefer Sutherland...

78. Neo-Noir

Black velvet...

After the moodiness of *Chinatown* and *The Long Goodbye*, neo-noir got playful in the '80s, pastiching (*Body Heat*, *Blood Simple*) and parodying (*Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*) away... until David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* injected a kink into the genre that's been reverberating ever since.



79. Do The Right Thing (1989)

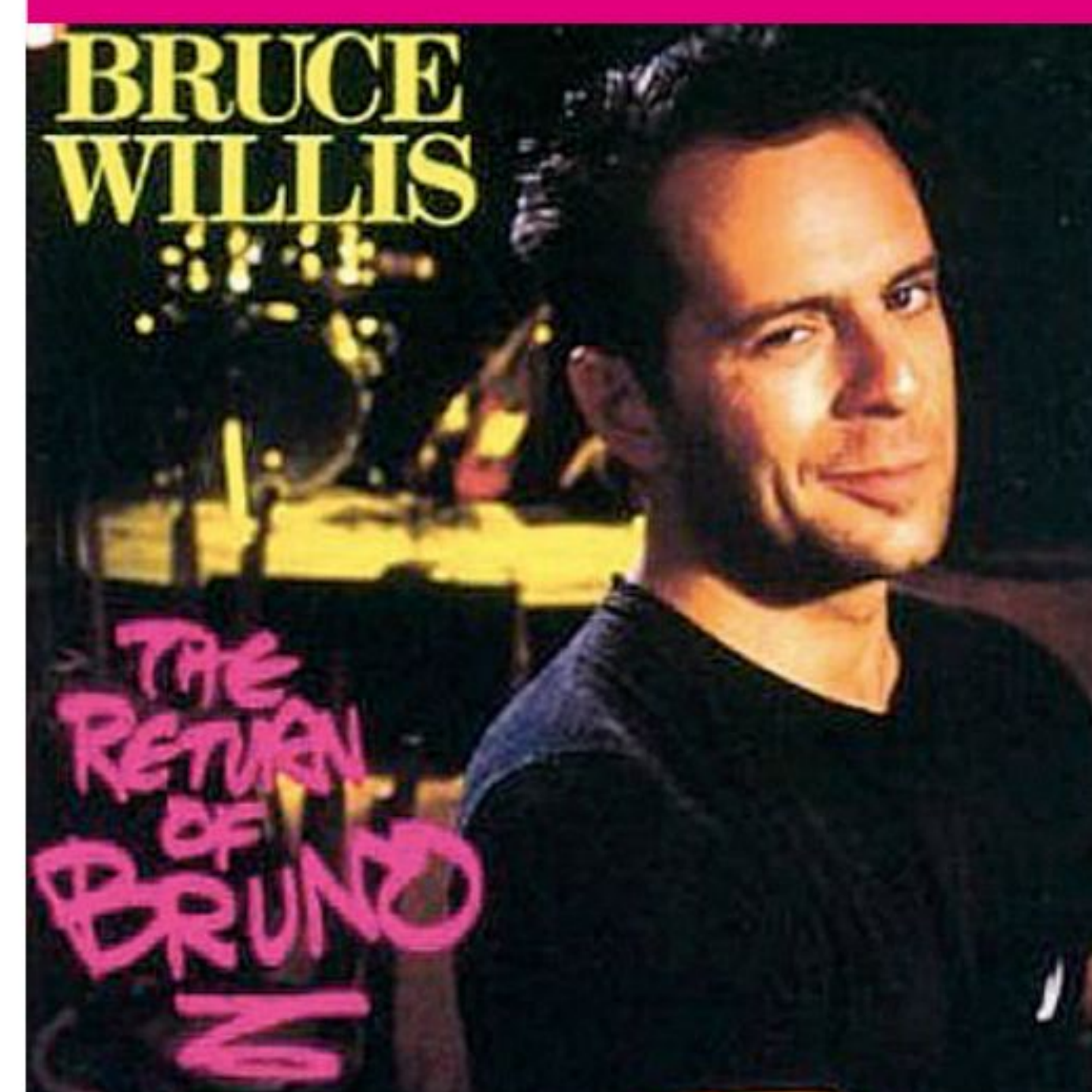
The heat is on...

After scratching out a screenplay in two weeks, Spike Lee filmed his story of multi-ethnic Brooklyn tension as an ambiguous flip-flop between the teachings of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Liberal reviewers steamed up over the suggestion that a race riot was the "right thing" to do in the face of oppression. But Lee was just venting a howl of frustration against bigotry.

80 GREAT THINGS

And 8 Not So Great...

1. Tiananmen Square
2. The Falklands War
3. Chernobyl
4. Hungerford
5. Hillsborough
6. The Challenger Disaster
7. AIDS
8. Bruce Willis' 'Under The Boardwalk'



80. Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)

Some guys have all the luck...

He's got the Ferrari, the girl and he bunks class without paying the consequences. Don't you just want to cuff his privileged ass? Oddly, no – Matthew Broderick's performance was so disarming that Master Bueller's antics won the affections of all the cliques:

sporto, motorhead, geek, slut, blood, waistoid, dweebie or dickhead. Written by John Hughes over a single weekend, *Ferris* is a career summit that compacts all his key themes – angst (*The Breakfast Club*), wish-fulfillment (*Weird Science*), and slapstick (*Home Alone*) – into one irresistible whole.

SIGOURNEY WEAVER

In a decade where the big screen was dominated by male excess and machismo, one actress emerged who was able to go eyeball to eyeball...

Skirts billowing up in the wind... To readers of a certain age, the '80s will have provided two vivid images of women with their dresses flying up towards their permed hairdos. One was Kelly LeBrock in *The Woman In Red*. The other was Sigourney Weaver, who, at the climax of *Ghostbusters*, had to decide whether she'd rather be possessed by the demon Zuul or Bill Murray, all while the winds of Hell were blowing her dress up around her shoulders.

But while the ex-Mrs Steven Seagal is now but a footnote to the decade of big hair and shoulder pads (apart from that TV outing in the US version of *Celebrity Fit Club*, where she led a team called 'Kelly's Bellies'), Weaver marches on, regularly turning in smart, varied performances to this day (*The Ice Storm*, *Heartbreakers*, *Avatar*). Somehow she's avoided the career cul-de-sac that forces most actresses over 40 into a plastic-surgery purgatory.

Despite her continued relevance, though, Sigourney's box-office peak happened in the '80s. At the close of the decade, she was Oscar-nominated for both Best Actress (for *Gorillas In The Mist*) and Best Supporting Actress (for *Working Girl*), putting her in the select band of actors to be nominated twice in the same year. Still, it was ghosts and aliens rather than gorillas and acquisitions which cemented her appeal. *Ghostbusters* was the phenomenon, ruling the box-office in 1984, ahead of *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* and *Beverly Hills Cop*. Five years later the sequel also did respectable business, playing up the cool chemistry between Weaver's Dana Barrett and Murray's Peter Venkman. (Dana: "After dinner, I don't want you putting any of the old cheap moves on me. It's different now." Venkman: "Don't worry. I have all new cheap moves.")

Murray loved to tease Weaver on set, introducing her as the "two-time Oscar nominee" before her scenes and generally going out of his

way to ensure that she – nor anyone else, for that matter – didn't take herself too seriously. "He'd try and hang me upside down or tickle me," recalled Weaver, who hadn't even been considered for the part initially. Dana Barrett was the last of the major characters to be cast and, despite rejecting numerous actresses before her, Weaver wasn't even in the running in director Ivan Reitman's mind – he felt she was just too serious to play a character who becomes demonically possessed and turns into a sex siren.

"Ivan, multiple schizophrenics are my speciality," joked Weaver at her audition, before playing out the possession scene for the director. Several frenzied leaps on to the couch and a few bites of the cushions later and the part was hers.

Bill Murray loved to tease Weaver on set, introducing her as the 'two-time Oscar nominee' before takes

Despite Paul Feig and Kristen Wiig's upcoming all-female *Ghostbusters*, there's still talk of a *Ghostbusters III*. But Weaver is focussing on two other big franchises instead, with *Alien 5* in the offing (*District 9* director Neill Blomkamp's at the helm) and *Avatar 2-4* now in pre-production. "I've always regretted having such a serious career, because I'm really more of an idiot," she insists. But such is the power of *Alien*'s legacy and the resonance of her own portrayal of Ellen Ripley that in Hollywood, a 'Sigourney Weaver-type' is shorthand for a strong, ferociously independent woman.

Alien hit the big screen on the eve of the '80s, in 1979, but it would be almost five years before the sequel got underway. In between, Weaver cultivated her Hollywood stardom, starring in a thriller with William Hurt (1981's *Eyewitness*), a political drama with Mel Gibson (1982's *The*


Year Of Living Dangerously) and a comedy with chuckle kingpin Chevy Chase (1983's *Deal Of The Century*), as well as *Ghostbusters*.

Things were ticking along quite nicely, even if she wasn't exactly the Julia Roberts of her time. Nonetheless, when James Cameron rang up Weaver to discuss his script for *Aliens*, she was initially sceptical about returning to the role of Ellen Ripley. But it quickly became clear that Cameron wasn't willing to make the sequel without her. "I was egotistical enough to be moved by that," admitted the actress. Not that she and Cameron always saw eye to eye about the movie. "What we always differed on was how much she hated the alien," recalled the director. "Sigourney had the response, 'The alien is a

creature and I can't blame it for the death of my crew,' and my feeling was, 'You hate that motherfucker.' I was the throttle and she was the brakes. She would always pull back from a moment that was pushing it too far — that's why you get this incredibly modulated performance.

Let's face it, science-fiction films don't usually get nominations for Best Actress."

As to tackling *Alien 5*, Weaver is philosophical about reuniting with the xenomorph almost a decade after *Alien Resurrection*. "I can't think of a better director," she says of teaming up with Blomkamp. "He's a real fan. I think he'll be true to the world and take it in unexpected directions. It's got a lot of sinew in it. It will certainly stand up to the others and probably break a lot of new ground as well."

Meanwhile, Blomkamp admits Weaver's had a hand in breaking the film's story. "I spoke to her about it," he says. "She told me how she felt about the character and the history of Ripley. It was interesting. I was like, 'There's a way to tie what she's saying into my idea in a way that's pretty awesome.'" After five decades in the biz, Weaver's star clearly hasn't dimmed any... 

Quote me

Weaver's career in her words...

On Being Tall...

"I think if you're 5'10" when you're 11 years old, you're just gonna be weird for the rest of your life."

On Gorillas In The Mist

"This little gorilla came over and sat down next to me and put her hand on my arm, and her hand was so hot, I felt it all the way through my windbreaker."

From that moment on, every time I was sitting with the gorillas, I felt such intense joy, like nothing I've ever felt, except maybe being with my daughter."

On Working Girl

"I actually felt a little sympathy for Max. I think in her heart, she knew what she was doing was wrong, but still felt that the end was justified. Luckily, she's redeemable."





TEEN

TEENAGE

From sex comedies like *Porky's* to John Hughes' cotton-candy visions of adolescent angst, the '80s were a nirvana for the teen genre...

School's out: *The Breakfast Club* was the epitome of the '80s teen movie



KICKS

What bliss it was to be a teenage star in the '80s. At no other time since the late '50s and '60s, when the beach party mini-genre and rock'n'roll flicks were in full swing, had the teenager occupied such a privileged place in cinema. Dissenters would argue that this was all a consequence of the creeping infantilisation of movies that had been taking hold since *Star Wars* in 1977. Having witnessed the untapped youth audience queuing round (and round) the block for that movie, it became clear to the studio executives of the late '70s and early '80s that 'the kids' would need more to sate their appetites than the humdrum live-action movies that Disney was churning out. Youngsters hooked on cinema after seeing *Star Wars* as kids would soon be hitting puberty – they'd be needing movies, and lots of them. And as for their older brothers and sisters...

Two species of teen movie dominated the early part of that decade. First, there was the bawdy sex comedy, a coarse and more explicit forerunner to more contemporary hits like the *American Pie* series and *Superbad*. The most successful entries in this genre were the *Porky's* films, kicking off with the original in 1982. The recipe was straightforward: take a group of oversexed teenage boys hungry for experience, throw in endless scenes of voyeurism, gratuitous nudity, humiliating sexual encounters, add a touch more gratuitous nudity and, er, that's it.

Safely situated in a nostalgic, sub-*American Graffiti*-style US-gone-by, *Porky's* was almost entirely without merit, and yet it struck a chord. Teenagers saw versions of their own experiences, or experiences they fantasised about having, and went back to the film with their mates or, in time, their dates. Two more increasingly threadbare instalments were rushed out – the bizarre *Porky's II: The Next Day* (1983), in which the characters do battle with the Ku Klux Klan in between peering down girls' cleavages, and *Porky's Revenge* (1985) – but quality mattered even less to audiences than the filmmakers, and the movies provided ample Saturday night amusement, not to mention scenes to be filed away in adolescent wank-banks.

The *Porky's* series had arisen due to the phenomenal popularity of an Israeli series of >>



TEEN



Teen icons: John Hughes with stars Molly Ringwald and Michael Schoeffling

teen sex comedies, dubbed into English, beginning with 1978's *Eskimo Limon*, better known as *Lemon Popsicle*. A US remake, *The Last American Virgin*, was a middling success in 1982, but by then the numerous sequels to *Lemon Popsicle* flooded in – *Going Steady* (1979), *Hot Bubblegum* (1981), *Private Popsicle* (1982) – and it took the more aggressively-marketed *Porky's* to really exploit the teen sex genre.

After that, it was open season on teenager's spending money, with exploitative comedies such as 1983's *Screwballs*, 1984's *Revenge Of The Nerds* and *Hot Dog: The Movie* and 1985's *Loose Screws* proving that there were no depths to which young actors in search of a career, and studio heads in search of a hit, would not sink. One thing that can be said for the makers of the *Porky's* series is that they knew when to quit. The *Popsicle* purveyors, on the other hand, have exhibited no such self-awareness, as anyone who has seen 2005's *Lemon Popsicle 9: The Party Goes On* can attest.

Teenagers too young to watch the *Porky's* movies, too chicken to sneak in through the fire exit, or just

“RAT PACK, WHICH BRAT PACK IS CLEARLY A PARODY OF, WAS NOT NEGATIVE. BRAT PACK SUGGESTS UNRULY YOUNG PEOPLE” John Hughes

in receipt of a more chaste and candy-coloured perspective on adolescence, had the teen comedies of John Hughes on which to gorge themselves. If you want to know about teen movies of the '80s, you have to know about Hughes. It was his output that brought together the young performers dubbed 'the Brat Pack' in the media, a term not favoured by Hughes himself. "There is definitely a little adult envy," he remarked. "The young actors get hit harder because of their age. Because 'Rat Pack' – which Brat Pack is clearly a parody of – was not negative. 'Brat Pack' is. It suggests unruly, arrogant young people, and that isn't true of these people."

It was Hughes who most consistently gave teenage life exposure on the screen. Which is not to say that he had any truck with realism. For that, you

need to look to much tougher teen films from that period, such as Penelope Spheeris's loose trilogy: *The Decline Of Western Civilisation* (1981), *Suburbia* (1984) and *The Boys Next Door* (1985). But it was Hughes who was most successful in selling back to teenagers an idealised dream of what it meant to be young. Teenagers could be stars without his help – neither River Phoenix nor Michael J Fox required his patronage – but it was his movies that gave career-launching roles to Molly Ringwald, Ally Sheedy, Anthony Michael Hall, Emilio Estevez, Eric Stoltz, Matthew Broderick, Judd Nelson, James Spader and Mary Stuart Masterson.

In his key films of the '80s – *Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Weird Science*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Some Kind Of Wonderful* – he hawked a vision of



Wet wet wet: *Porky's* represented a saucier brand of teen comedy

teenage life, with its clear moral line, bite-sized dilemmas and mix'n'match fashion sense, which prevailed in the teen genre for several years in the middle of the decade. He was the real deal, so much so that when other hands attempted to exploit the formula he had created, the results were laughable. Joel Schumacher's *St Elmo's Fire*, for example, was populated with Brat Packers like Estevez, McCarthy, Nelson, Sheedy, and a young Demi Moore, but makes *Sixteen Candles* look like documentary realism.

Hughes first hit the media headlines in 1983, when two comedies he had scripted – *Mr Mom* and *National Lampoon's Vacation* – became unexpectedly colossal hits. He swiftly signed a three-year, \$30 million deal that included *Sixteen Candles* and *The Breakfast Club*, the two movies that forged his reputation and established him as the man with a direct line to the psyche of the average '80s teen. "Hughes' films were, to be sure, perfectly crafted for Reagan America," observed Peter Bast in *Variety*. "They were superficially hip, but mushy soft at the core. They were seemingly edgy, but always optimistic. Hughes' audience, now middle-aged, remembers Hughes' films with a fond glow and would love to revisit them." >>

MAKING THE GRADE

Some briefly ruled the roost, then vanished. Others navigated the perm-primping shoals to a proper career. Rating the career progress of the decade's teen giants...



MATTHEW BRODERICK AKA: FERRIS BUELLER

TEEN YEARS: *WarGames* (1983), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986)

THAT WAS THEN: While Broderick doesn't have the same breadth of teen movies as other stars on this list, he deserves

his place on the strength of one film alone. Like most John Hughes films, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is based on a simple premise: young Ferris wants to skive off school for a day of Ferrari driving, carnival singing and sausage-king-of-Chicago-impersonating mischief. Still the best role in Broderick's career.

THIS IS NOW: Apart from becoming Mr Sarah Jessica Parker, Broderick has evolved into the consummate Broadway performer. His standout success has been in Mel Brooks' adaptation of his film *The Producers* for the stage – and then back into celluloid at the end of 2005.

GRADE
B



JOHN CUSACK AKA: THE BOY NEXT DOOR

TEEN YEARS: *Class* (1983), *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *Better Off Dead* (1985), *The Sure Thing* (1985), *One Crazy Summer* (1986), *Stand By Me* (1986), *Say Anything* (1989)

THAT WAS THEN: Mr Cusack's teen

film roles were often a cut above most of his contemporaries – *Better Off Dead* notwithstanding. Despite his small, dorky turn in *Sixteen Candles*, Cusack's defining teen role is that of Lloyd Dobler in Cameron Crowe's *Say Anything*. The picture of him holding a boombox aloft to win back a girl is as enduring a cinematic image of the '80s as Cruise in his aviators.

THIS IS NOW: Cusack has been picky in choosing his adult roles, which has made him able to truly leave his teen years behind. He dipped back into the '80s with *Hot Tub Time Machine* and excelled in dramas *The Paperboy* and *The Butler*.

GRADE
A



COREY HAIM AKA: ONE OF THE COREYS

TEEN YEARS: *Lucas* (1986), *The Lost Boys* (1983), *Silver Bullet* (1985), *License To Drive* (1988), *Dream A Little Dream* (1989)

THAT WAS THEN: A former child star who made his biggest '80s impact in Joel Schumacher's teen vampire flick *The Lost Boys*. His name is often uttered in the same breath as Corey Feldman (see below), and the duo appeared in eight movies together, including the rubber-burning hit *License To Drive*.

THIS IS NOW: Despite going off the rails throughout the '90s (severe drug abuse resulting in a stroke, handgun charges, lawsuits), Haim did manage to work, albeit in straight-to-video fodder with titles like *Demolition University* and *Fever Lake*. Though he seemed to have cleaned up his act by 2004, he tragically died in 2010.

GRADE
C



COREY FELDMAN AKA: ONE OF THE COREYS

TEEN YEARS: *Gremlins* (1984), *The Goonies* (1985), *Stand By Me* (1986), *The Lost Boys* (1987), *License To Drive* (1988), *Dream A Little Dream* (1989)

THAT WAS THEN: Another former child star (he started working at the age of three), the California-born Feldman came of age in the '80s with notable roles in *Gremlins*, *The Goonies* and *Stand By Me*. Teaming up with Carey Haim in *The Lost Boys* proved to be the beginning of a long-running friendship, the pair going on to become two of the highest-paid teen actors of the decade.

THIS IS NOW: Just like 'the other Corey', Feldman had his share of drug and alcohol problems in the '90s. After trying to launch an ill-advised hip-hop career and agreeing to star in a 1995 sequel to *Dream A Little Dream*, Feldman has since gone back to television, appearing in the US version of *I'm A Celebrity* and *The Surreal Life*.

GRADE
C



TEEN



ANTHONY MICHAEL HALL AKA: THE GEEK

TEEN YEARS: *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983), *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Weird Science* (1985)

THAT WAS THEN: Turning being geeky into an art

form throughout his teenage years, Anthony Michael Hall is never more sympathetic than when he plays Brian (The Brain) in *The Breakfast Club*, the character who nails each of his friends into the stereotypes they both are – and are not. Clearly, John Hughes saw the potential in his nerdy nature early on when he cast Hall as Farmer Ted (aka 'The Geek') in *Sixteen Candles*.

THIS IS NOW: Perhaps due to his continual casting as the geek throughout his teen years, Hall bears no resemblance to his former scrawny self. He buffed-up to star in *The Dead Zone*, the TV series based on Stephen King's book. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hall remains philosophical about the '80s: "I'm always baffled by actors who are like, 'I'm not going to talk about the '80s.' What? You're just forgetting that whole experience? I feel very fortunate to have been able to do those films."

GRADE



MOLLY RINGWALD AKA: THE TEEN PRINCESS

TEEN YEARS: *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Pretty In Pink* (1985), *Fresh Horses* (1988)

THAT WAS THEN: With her fiery hair and ability to portray both the girl from the wrong side of the tracks (*Pretty In Pink*) and the popular princess (*The Breakfast Club*), Ringwald was first choice whenever John Hughes was casting his latest teen outing.

THIS IS NOW: Film work has been sporadic, but Ringwald has found her feet again on stage in later years, with roles including Sally Bowles in Broadway's *Cabaret* and Sally in the West End's *When Harry Met Sally*. She's also been unafraid to lampoon her own past with a neat cameo in *Not Another Teen Movie*.

GRADE



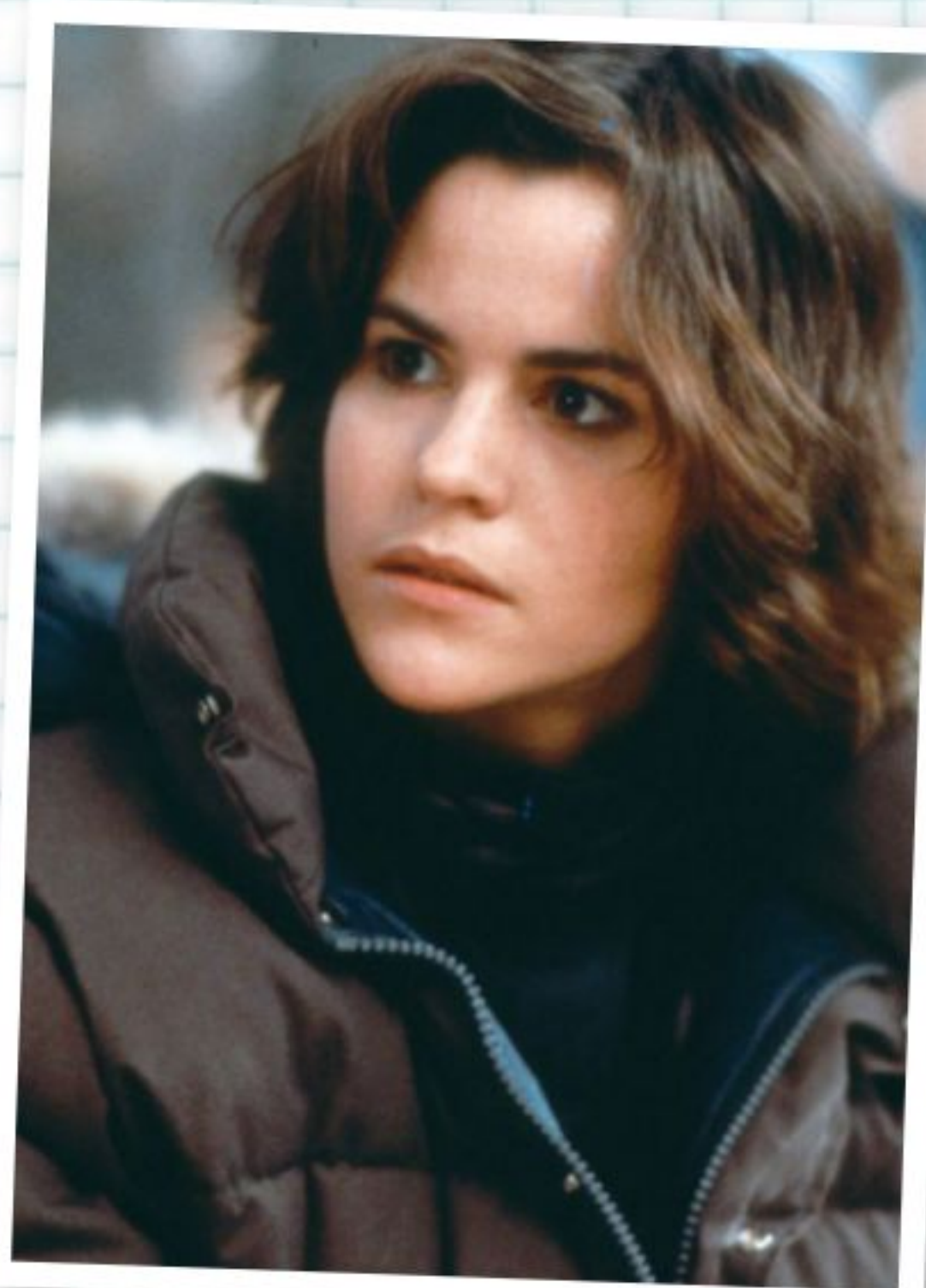
ANDREW MCCARTHY AKA: THE POSH BOY

TEEN YEARS: *Class* (1983), *St Elmo's Fire* (1985), *Pretty In Pink* (1986), *Fresh Horses* (1988)

THAT WAS THEN: Andrew McCarthy will forever be known as Blane, the boy from the right side of the tracks who breaks Molly Ringwald's heart in *Pretty In Pink*. He's also the twitchy one in *St Elmo's Fire*.

THIS IS NOW: McCarthy's career fell a little fallow during the '90s, with his work consisting mainly of made-for-TV movies. However, he's made a name for himself in quality TV drama, with appearances on *Law & Order SVU* and *Monk*, plus directing gigs on *Gossip Girl* and *Orange Is The New Black*.

GRADE



ALLY SHEEDY AKA: THE HEAD CASE

TEEN YEARS: *WarGames* (1983), *Oxford Blues* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *St Elmo's Fire* (1985)

THAT WAS THEN: Sheedy turned in some

fine performances, whether perfecting her girl-next-door persona (opposite Rob Lowe in *Oxford Blues* or Matthew Broderick in *WarGames*), but it was her portrayal of Allison Reynolds, the basket case in *The Breakfast Club* that remains her defining teen moment.

THIS IS NOW: After a string of TV movies, Sheedy has carved out a niche for herself in independent movies, winning acclaim for her role as a drug-addicted lesbian photographer in *High Art* in 1998. In the noughties she made a couple of choice TV guest appearances including a reunion with Anthony Michael Hall in *The Dead Zone*.

GRADE



The actual process of revisiting them, however, is complicated. Was there really a time when teens dressed like Molly Ringwald in *Pretty In Pink* – or indeed like any of that film's cast, from the blow-dried, freeze-dried Andrew McCarthy to the Teddy Boy fashion apocalypse represented by Jon Cryer in *Pretty In Pink*? And did they really have Psychedelic Furs, Simple Minds and Dream Academy booming from their big, cumbersome Sony Walkmans? The answer, which anyone who lived through the '80s and bought the T-shirt (or rather, the hairspray and Farah slacks) will know, is that, yes, things really were like that. What was different was that Hughes coated it all in a fairytale cosiness that assured you everything would turn out fine. It did for Hughes, whose bankability went through the roof.

"I think he's an enormously gifted man," said Ned Tanen, then president at Paramount, "and very possibly a genius." Success didn't wane for Hughes for some years, perhaps because he ploughed his particular furrow with such single-mindedness – a quality that, together with his allegedly capricious practice of firing collaborators on a whim, made him increasingly unpopular in Hollywood. He admitted, just as his critics had always suspected, that he didn't have much experience of life outside the proms, the parties, the malls.

"I think it's wise for people to concern themselves with the things they know about," he said. "I don't consider myself qualified to do a movie about international intrigue – I seldom leave the country. I'd really like to do something on gangs, but to do that I've got to spend some time with gang members. I'd feel extremely self-conscious writing about something I don't know." Consequently, while Hughes moved on to write other hits aimed at different age groups – from *Planes, Trains And Automobiles* to the *Home Alone* series and *Maid In Manhattan* – he never really fully developed.

Just as Hughes was left looking out of step by changing tastes, the stars he moulded were left similarly high and dry. Those performers who did go on to brilliant careers were usually the ones who had been flies in the ointment of Hughes' sugary worldview – like James Spader, who laid out the blueprint for his slightly sinister persona in his role as the hissable villain in 1986's *Pretty In Pink* – or whose careers had not been dependent solely on him, like Matthew Broderick. It's telling, though, that some had to go to extreme lengths to bury all memory of their Hughes years, such as Ally Sheedy, who only revealed herself as an actress of note once she played a lesbian drug-addict photographer in 1998's *High Art*.

In any case, the films that can still be viewed without the embarrassment of looking at old school photographs are not those made by Hughes. It tends to be the less brash, more offbeat efforts that survive the fads and trends. That's why *Heathers* still prickles. That movie wasn't sombre in its celebration of teenage life, like Hughes was, and it didn't strive to be liked.

Similarly, of the two teen movies that Francis Ford Coppola adapted from SE Hinton novels – the desperately serious *The Outsiders* and the playful, experimental, Cocteau-influenced *Rumble Fish*, both from 1983 – it is the latter which now retains its sparkle, while the former looks ill at ease anywhere but in a mid-afternoon slot on Channel Five.



Youth brigade: Matt Dillon heads up *Rumble Fish*, (l-r below) Rob Lowe in *St Elmo's Fire*, Phoebe Cates in *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*

“HUGHES’ FILMS WERE SUPERFICIALLY HIP BUT MUSHY AT THE CORE. PEOPLE REMEMBER THEM WITH A FOND GLOW” Peter Bast

Seriousness and moralising, it seems now, are the ultimate obstacles to longevity in the teen genre. Look how poker-faced and prissy 1980’s *Times Square* or 1984’s *Footloose* are about the subject of teenage rebellion. And compare them with the freewheeling, devil-may-care attitude exhibited in early films starring that archetypal ’80s teen star Matt Dillon: *Over The Edge* (1979), say, or *My Bodyguard* and *Little Darlings* (both 1980).

For a viable alternative to John Hughes, and to the follies of the ’80s teen aesthetic, you could do worse than delve into Cameron Crowe’s back catalogue. This one-time *Rolling Stone* reporter went back to high school as research for his 1982 teen comedy *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*. The result was neither a *Porky’s*-style sex comedy

or a placatory John Hughes-esque fairytale, but something brimming with a freshness and frankness that would be missing from both of those more commercially successful enterprises.

It also introduced a handful of actors who could expose any Brat Packer as bogus: Anthony Edwards (later of *ER*), Eric Stoltz, Phoebe Cates, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Judge Reinhold and, best of all, Sean Penn, giving off waves of stoned bemusement as the strung-out Spicoli. What Crowe’s writing benefited from, and what was later missing from Hughes’ offerings, was a sense of feeling, rather than an undying reverence, for the carefree rhythms of youth. Crowe didn’t idealise his characters or filter them through hindsight; fortunately, he had some of the most idiosyncratic actors of that generation to embody his creations as he would have on his

directorial debut, *Say Anything* in 1989, which starred John Cusack and also boasted a priceless cameo from *Mystic Pizza*’s Lili Taylor.

One element conspicuous in its absence from the successful teen movies of the ’80s is any sense of foreboding, any sense that the fun would ever end for these heartthrobs and hot-shots. Some of the stars of the era had no trouble graduating to mature roles: Matt Dillon made arguably the most miraculous transformation in *Drugstore Cowboy* at the end of the decade – not just a plum part, but a mission statement regarding the actor he would become, the risks he was prepared to take. It wasn’t that way for everyone. The two Coreys – Haim and Feldman – fell into the old cycle of conspicuous consumption, drug addiction and dwindling potential. Feldman is reported to have cleaned up now, while Haim tragically died in 2010.

It would be easy to see a message about the corrosive effect of the ’80s in the defining teen tragedy from that period – the death of River Phoenix in 1993 aged 23 (see page 108). But in truth, Phoenix’s death from an accidental drugs overdose has been an anomaly. Even at such a young age, he was already an accomplished actor whose rare excursions into typical teen territory (1988’s *A Night In The Life Of Jimmy Reardon*, for instance) were easily put in the shade by his stunning work in *Stand By Me* and *Running On Empty*.

It wasn’t that the hedonistic teen culture of the ’80s had caused Phoenix’s death. Rather, his death threw that decade of throwaway fun into sharp relief. The lot of most teen stars is a difficult one. Only the most pliable will make the transition to an adult career. You can resent the teen movies of the ’80s for conspiring to pretend that everything would be hunky-dory forever, but you can’t blame them. Nothing lasts forever. Maybe John Hughes should have made a movie about that. 🍷



TEEN

BILL TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

IT WAS THE TEEN COMEDY THAT MADE HISTORY **TOTALLY BODACIOUS**. SIMON BLAND HOPS INTO THE PHONE BOX



GETTY (3), REX (1)

don't think I've ever told anyone this before but when I first got the script, I just totally did not get it – at all!" laughs Alex Winter remembering the first time he crossed paths with Bill S Preston, Esq. Together with Keanu Reeves' Ted "Theodore" Logan, the slacker duo brought peace to the universe and successfully survived high school in 1989's totally non-heinous teen comedy *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure*. "The language was so beautiful and hilarious and ornate and I just didn't get it. It wasn't until I started auditioning for it and I met the writers Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, and director Steve Herek that I realised how infectiously fun it was to say that dialogue and I immediately wanted the part. I got really excited about it."

Matheson and Solomon, on the other hand, never had any shortage of excitement for Bill and Ted. As comedy writers and best buds, their airhead teen counterparts had been living with them for some time before production on *Excellent Adventure* ever even began. "We would rent a little theatre every Sunday night and play around with ideas," Matheson tells *SFX*. "The suggestion was two teenage boys talking about world affairs. It was me and Ed and I would say, 'How's it going, Bill?' and he'd say, 'How's it going, Ted?' and we just launched into these characters," he recalls, effortlessly slipping into a pitch-perfect impression of the San Dimas duo. "Almost from the beginning they were just really fun to do. At the end of that evening we went out to a coffee shop >>



BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE



1989



TEEN

Napoleon before he invades San Dimas



and stayed in character. We just sat there eating food, drinking coffee and coming up with their story.

"Ed did stand-up comedy," continues Matheson, "and at one of his shows he and I went on stage as Bill and Ted and answered questions from the audience. Everything was either 'excellent' or 'bogus' because that's all they know," he laughs. "I went off to graduate school and Ed was working for a TV show in LA but we would get on the phone and just talk as Bill and Ted for hours. By the time we got to the point where we thought we should do something with these guys we had already been playing with them for over a year. We had a very nuanced understanding of them." It was this familiarity with the characters that helped them knock out a script for what would ultimately become *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure* in just seven days. "It was uncanny because we knew them so well that we kind of knew what they would say,"

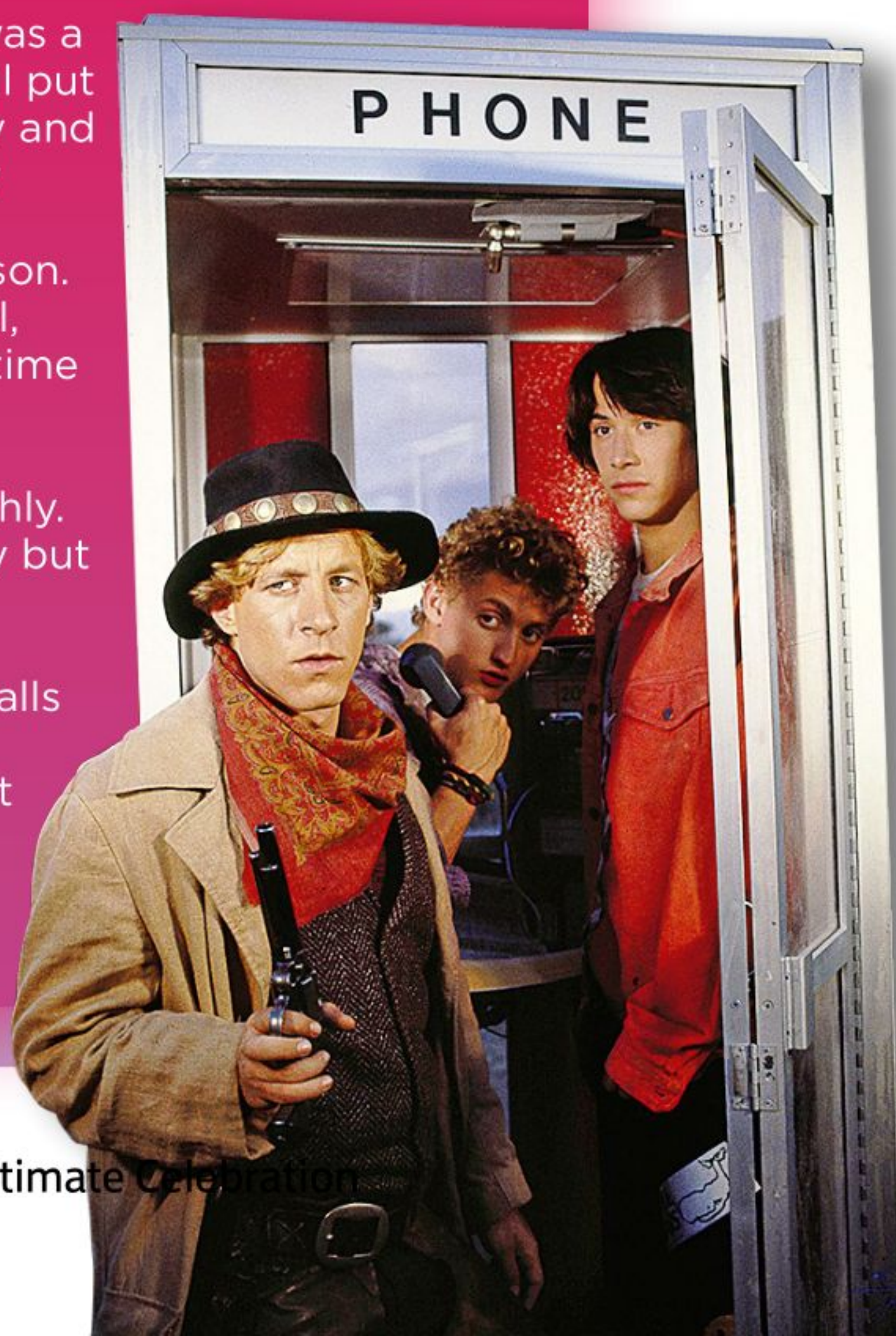


Amy Stoch plays Missy, Bill's young stepmother

NEED A RIDE?

Bill and Ted's ring theory

After *Back To The Future* beat *Bill And Ted's Time Van* to the punch, writers Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon and director Stephen Herek were forced to go back to the drawing board regarding their heroes' time-travelling device. It was Herek who ultimately came up with the idea of a phone booth but before that, any and all suggestions were welcome. "There was a draft where they all put on rings essentially and they just sort of fly through time," remembers Matheson. "Just out of control, flung through the time void, falling and pin-wheeling and landing really roughly. That seemed funny but pretty chaotic and disorganised and unfocused," he recalls with a smile. "That didn't make the cut and I think it's probably better that it didn't!"



he explains. "We would just be talking and one of us would be writing down the dialogue we were saying. It happened very quickly."

Unbeknownst to Winter, it was this script (then titled *Bill And Ted's Time Van*) that would help him forge a friendship that's lasted almost thirty years. "We became incredibly close friends," says Winter, recalling the first time he met co-star Keanu Reeves during the audition process. "We became really tight. If either of us hadn't gotten the part, it would have been comical because we were like best friends by the time the audition process was over," he laughs. "We both rode motorcycles. We'd go to the auditions and then we'd go back to one or the other's house and just play bass."

"It was pretty obvious to everyone that they were the two guys," confirms Matheson. "They met, I'm pretty sure, waiting to audition, and they hit it off and are still close friends 30 years later. There's a lot of chemistry between these two guys."

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Winter echoes the sentiment. "It was like play in a sense," he suggests, discussing his work with Keanu on *Excellent Adventure*. "It's like when you and your best friend were kids and you'd go out into your backyard and just go into some world until you got called in for dinner. That's what doing those movies was like." That said, casting Alex and Keanu did change the way Matheson and Solomon saw their on-screen other halves. "Ed and I both felt like losers in high school so Bill and Ted, for us, were kind of really lame outsiders who nobody liked," admits Matheson. "Then you bring in Alex and Keanu and they're both



Holy moly! Bill and Ted chill with Socrates and Mr The Kid



super-good-looking young guys with tons of charisma and they couldn't be cooler! Of course that shapes things a little bit," he smiles. "Bill and Ted got a lot cooler once Alex and Keanu showed up."

With Bill and Ted raring to go, their Excellent Adventure was starting to take shape. Just a few final touches were needed before they could hit the circuits of time and get the hands-on experience they needed to ace high school history. "Rufus was originally their friend," reveals Matheson of Bill and Ted's time-travel mentor, played coolly by comedian George Carlin. "He was a 27-year-old high school junior and he had a dog named Dog Rufus. He drove them through time in his 1969 Chevy van. That got changed along the way, basically because of *Back To The Future*. Director Stephen Herek had the idea of a phone booth and all of us were so clueless and knew nothing about *Doctor Who*," laughs Matheson. "It turned out to be pretty good idea. It worked."

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE



Bill and Ted were almost executed. Bogus!



Together they are "Wyld Stallyns"!

'KEANU AND I BECAME BEST FRIENDS BY THE TIME AUDITIONS WERE OVER'

and Ted's longevity. "It was made with a lot of heart and we played them with a lot of heart. It's not a 'wink and nod' movie, it's very sincere. They're absurd but they're totally sincere and that's kind of infectious."

"I'm going to be really corny and I'm going to say love," ventures Matheson, answering the same question. "Ed and I loved the characters from the start and Bill and Ted love each other. I think that starting point matters. I met my wife on the set too and we're still together after 30 years, so there's that little thing," he grins. "We were young when this thing got made. I was 27, Ed was

26 or 25, Alex and Keanu were probably 22 or something like that. Again to get sappy on you, it really was quite a beautiful experience." He pauses for a moment. "Plus, both Ed and I are very appreciative of the fact that somehow the meme that we put out into the world was 'Be excellent to each other', which is a really nice meme to have out there. We're both really happy about that." 🌸



"Dude, you've gotta have a poker face..."

Maybe on paper – but when cameras started to roll? "If you look at the special effects in that movie... I know they tried but they were working with the equivalent of an Atari," laughs Winter. "It was all practical for the most part. The phone booth was a real phone booth and it had this crappy little thing on the top which was the antenna that I was constantly breaking by accident. The phone booth was stuck hard on top of a hydraulic lift and we were just yanked up into the air against a blue screen and shoved around like a really low-rent rollercoaster. We had a great time.

"It's not showbiz nonsense," continues Winter, "but we really were all in it together. The director was really young. It was exciting. Our production designer who put the booth together was Roy Forge Smith, the legendary *Monty Python* designer who did *Time Bandits* and *Holy Grail* so it was an awesome group of people, but it was low-budget and it was a practical-effects driven movie. So a lot of times

Keanu and I were doing practical stuff because there was no way to augment it. For the phone booth, it was eight of us jammed into a phone booth during a blazing hot Phoenix summer and it was totally stinky and horrible!"

Matheson has similar memories from his time on the film shoot. "We were actually on set the whole time which was lovely," he recalls. "It was a very nice family environment that Steve Harek created. We're actually in the movie in the ice cream shop scene. It was a really fun experience."

WE WANT MORE

Cut to 2018 and *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure* remains a favourite among moviegoers with a rumoured third instalment, *Bill And Ted Face The Music*, threatening production. These air-guitar loving dudes have struck a chord with audiences that refuses to fade. "The film has a lot of heart," says Winter, pondering what might be to blame for Bill

FACE OFF!

Who was nearly who?

Bill and Ted have stuck with stars Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves since we first met them back in 1989 but they weren't always the first choice for their respective roles. "They were really fun to watch from the start," recalls Matheson, "but I'm pretty sure that the original idea was that Keanu would play Bill and Alex would play Ted," he reveals. "I don't know whose idea it was and I don't know why it didn't happen that way but it's good that it didn't. It's better the other way around," he admits. "It's better that Keanu plays Ted and Alex plays Bill although I can't exactly say why," laughs Matheson. "But it is better."





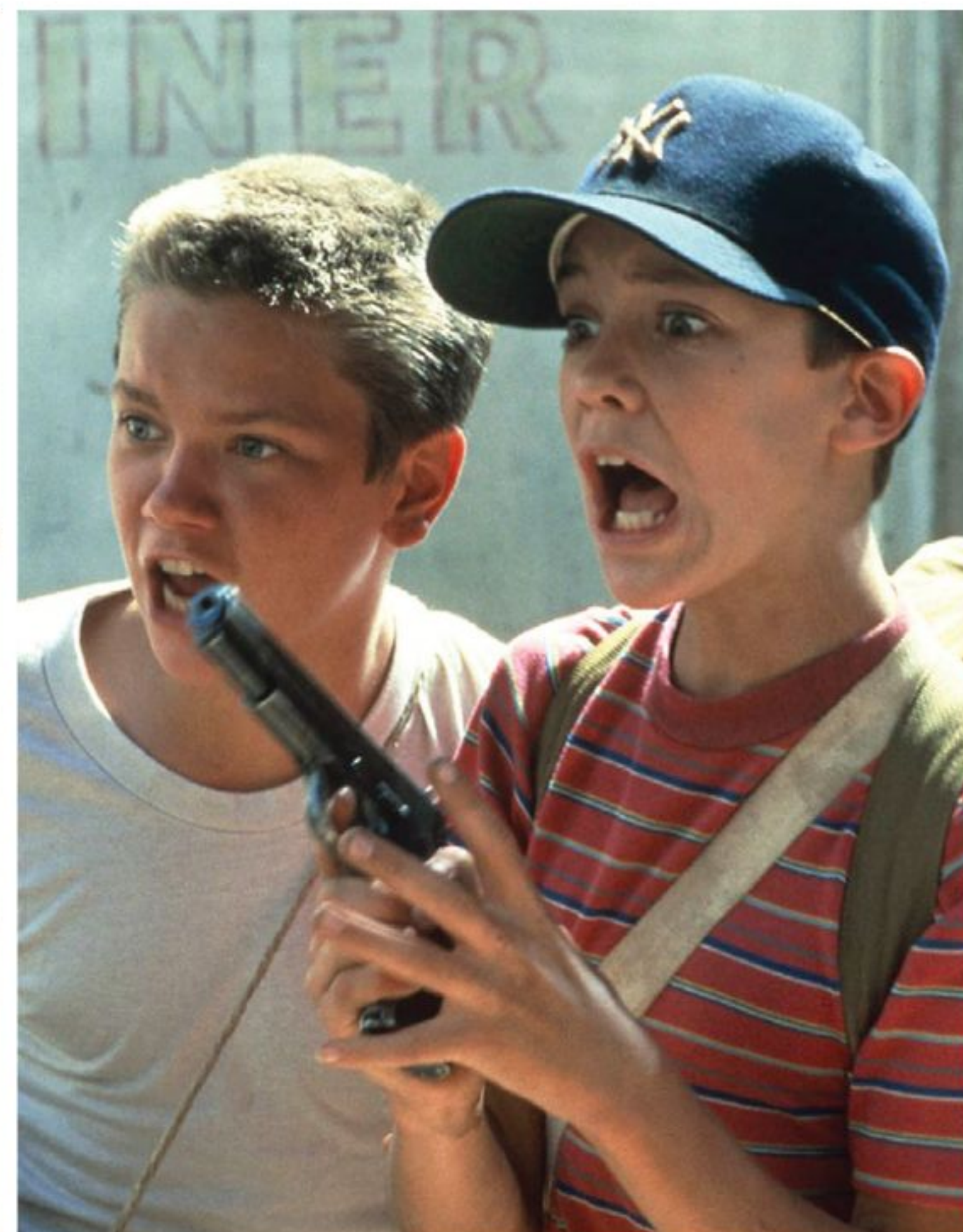
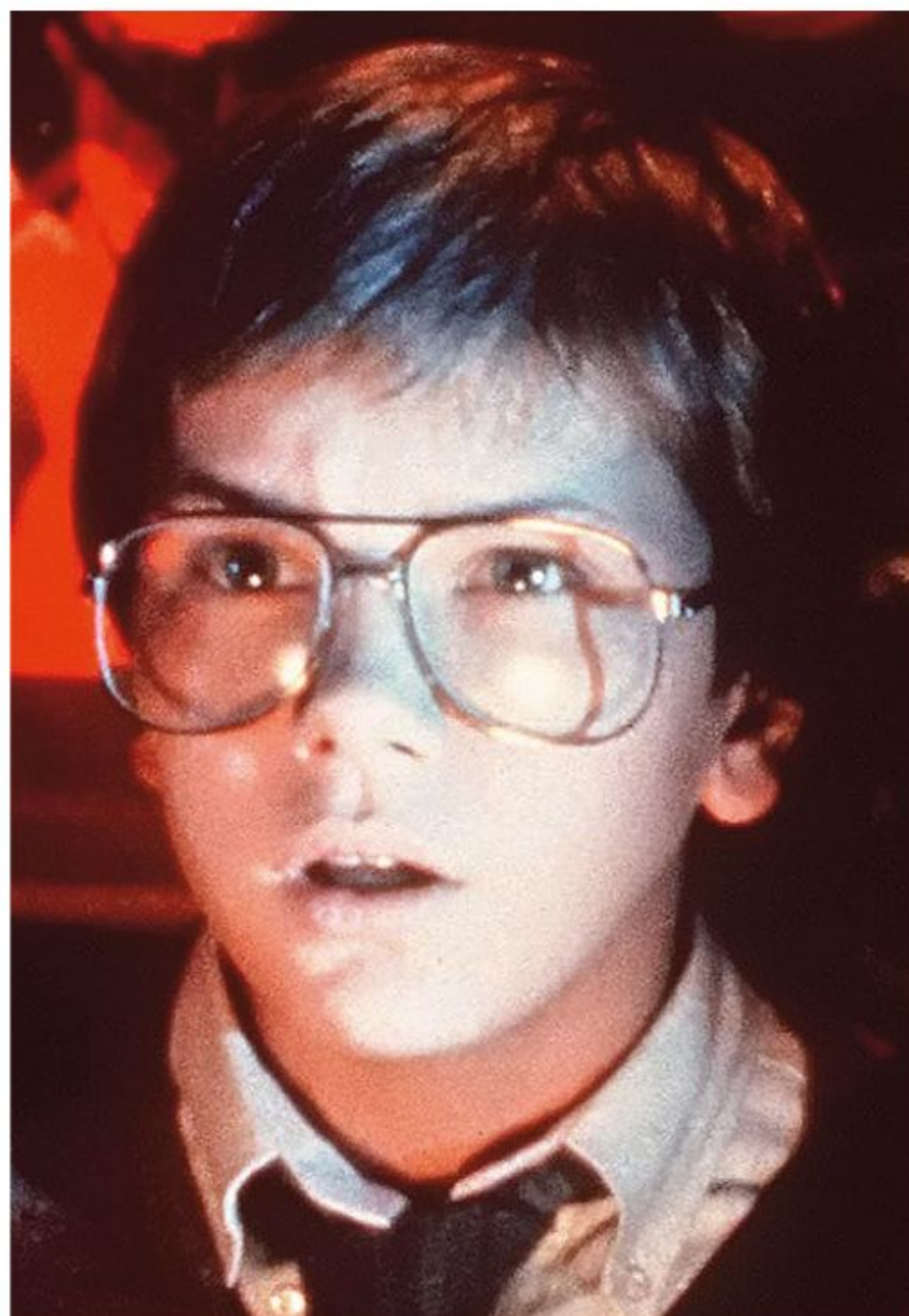
TEEN

1982

1985

1986

1986



THE RISE OF RIVER

He was arguably the greatest actor of his generation, an '80s heartthrob, eco-warrior, strict vegan, drug addict. And he was dead at 23...

WORDS **MATT MUELLER**

On the night of 30 October 1993, a party was in full flow in River Phoenix's room at Hotel Nikko, LA, attended by a group of friends that included his new girlfriend, actress Samantha Mathis, and his younger sister and brother, Rain and Leaf (later to take back the name he was born with, Joaquin). River was drinking champagne and snorting cocaine. He asked for his car to be brought over and the group headed off to The Viper Room rock club on Sunset Boulevard.

As Viper Room co-owner Johnny Depp and the Red Hot Chili Peppers jammed on stage, Phoenix stumbled to the men's room around 12:45am, where, already drugged-up to the gills, a musician pal gave him an exotic brand of heroin called Persian Brown. As soon as he snorted the powder, he knew something wasn't right. "What the fuck is in it?" he shouted, before staggering

back to the booth where his friends were. He threw up over himself, passed out briefly and asked to be taken outside for some air.

That's when the seizures started: arms and legs flailing, head bashing against the cold pavement... Rain lay on top of her brother to control his convulsions ("He was flopping like a guppy," said one witness), while Leaf made a call to 911. "My brother's having seizures... I'm thinking he's had Valium or something... You must get here, please, because he's dying."

At one point, Phoenix momentarily came to, saw a pair of photographers standing over him and uttered his last, wretched words: "No paparazzi! I want anonymity!" By the time the paramedics arrived, the actor was in full-blown cardiac arrest and, despite attempts to restart his heart at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, at 1:51am, the 23-year-old was pronounced dead.

Even as distraught fans turned the Viper Room sidewalk into a flower-strewn shrine, a cruel, recriminatory backlash kicked off. Out of the woodwork popped so-called 'friends', disclosing

1988

1989

1991

1993



AND FALL PHOENIX

tales of intoxication: he'd shown up at a formal wedding in ripped shorts, totally off his head; he'd nearly overdosed three years earlier; he was eternally spaced-out on his final film, *Dark Blood*.

What disturbed supporters and naysayers alike was the gulf between Phoenix's sensitive, eco-boy image and the mercurial drug hoover he'd become away from prying eyes. This, after all, was the militant vegan who'd once cried when a girlfriend ordered crab off the menu. How had this staunchly ethical world-warrior, once considered the most promising star of his age, allowed himself to become Hollywood's poster boy for drug abuse?

HEY JUDE

He was born River Jude Bottom in Madras, Oregon, to a pair of itinerant hippies who became missionaries for the eccentric cult Children Of God. His mother, Arlyn, was a middle-class Jewish girl who plunged headlong into the LSD-fuelled counter-culture, where she fell in love with John Bottom. River – whose name was inspired by the “river of life” in Hermann Hesse's

novel, *Siddhartha* – entered the world on 23 August, 1970, to a round of applause from friends invited to witness the event.

Bolting their cart to the Children Of God, John and Arlyn gave up acid (the cult forbade drug-taking), but were present during the commune's “free love” sexual heyday, where even children were encouraged to experiment, often with the sect's adult members. (Phoenix later claimed he lost his virginity at the age of four.) With John anointed as the cult's “Archbishop of Venezuela and the Caribbean”, the Bottoms journeyed through Central America, but eventually quit the cult. Living in a rat-infested hut in Caracas, Venezuela, the family – which now included another son, Leaf/Joaquin, and two daughters, Rainbow and Liberty – survived by peddling River and Rainbow's hymn-singing talents around the city, before finally hopping a freighter back to the States in 1977.

On their return, Arlyn re-christened the family Phoenix to symbolise their rebirth and transformed herself from fuzzy Earth mother to steely showbiz matriarch. Sizing up her kids' burgeoning talents,

she steered the clan towards California, where River and his siblings performed primitive dance moves on street corners like a faith-spouting Jackson Five and Arlyn landed them an agent who began sending River up for TV ads.

After four commercials, River rebelled against the ad-world phoniness and told his parents he wanted to be a serious actor. Aware that his button-nosed, blue-eyed cuteness was snagging attention, they relented and he landed a TV series (*Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*) that lasted one season, followed by TV movies and sitcom episodes. Then came his big screen debut: winning a role in Joe Dante's sci-fi adventure *Explorers* (1985). Playing a boy-genius boffin, it was a tough shoot for the 13-year-old, his unusual upbringing making him a target for bullying. Frequently reduced to tears, he nonetheless displayed incredible talent for an actor with no formal training. And directors were soon lining up to cast him.

It was 1986's superlative Rob Reiner Stephen King adaptation, *Stand By Me*, and his tender, honest performance as mixed-up teen Chris Chambers, >>



TEEN



that rocketed Phoenix to stardom. In the campfire scene, where Chris breaks down over the locals' contempt for his family, Reiner wasn't getting the emotion he wanted, so told River to think of someone he'd looked up to who had disappointed him. The next take, Phoenix unleashed a torrent, and was still wracked with sobs after Reiner called cut. "He didn't have a lot of technique," said the director, "but you just turned the camera on and he would tell the truth... Every time I see that scene I cry." Phoenix never revealed his inspiration.

SECOND SKIN

Phoenix shed his "second" virginity on *Stand By Me*, in a backyard tent pitched for the occasion by his parents. According to his co-

Although Phoenix was singled out for praise, *The Mosquito Coast* flopped, and the young star was panicked into a pair of dubious career moves – *A Night In The Life Of Jimmy Reardon* and *Little Nikita* – before righting the ship with *Running On Empty*. He was ideally cast as rebel pianist Danny Pope in Sidney Lumet's fugitive-family drama, and acted his way to an Oscar nomination with some revelatory performing, including an exchange where he tells girlfriend Martha Plimpton (also his off-screen partner) that his family are going back on the run – a scene of abject desperation that's among the most moving in his career.

Only 19, his Best Supporting Actor nod as the industry's expression of faith in Phoenix's bright future. "He has a strong,

heartthrob. "I go into remission, shut myself out and freak," he shuddered. "I don't like being out there."

RENT CHEQUE

It was a role his parents didn't want him to do, but Phoenix was breaking free of the tight grip they'd exerted over his career. Gus Van Sant's

'IT WOULD REALLY FRIGHTEN THE HELL OUT OF ME TO BE A CREATURE TAKING DRUGS'

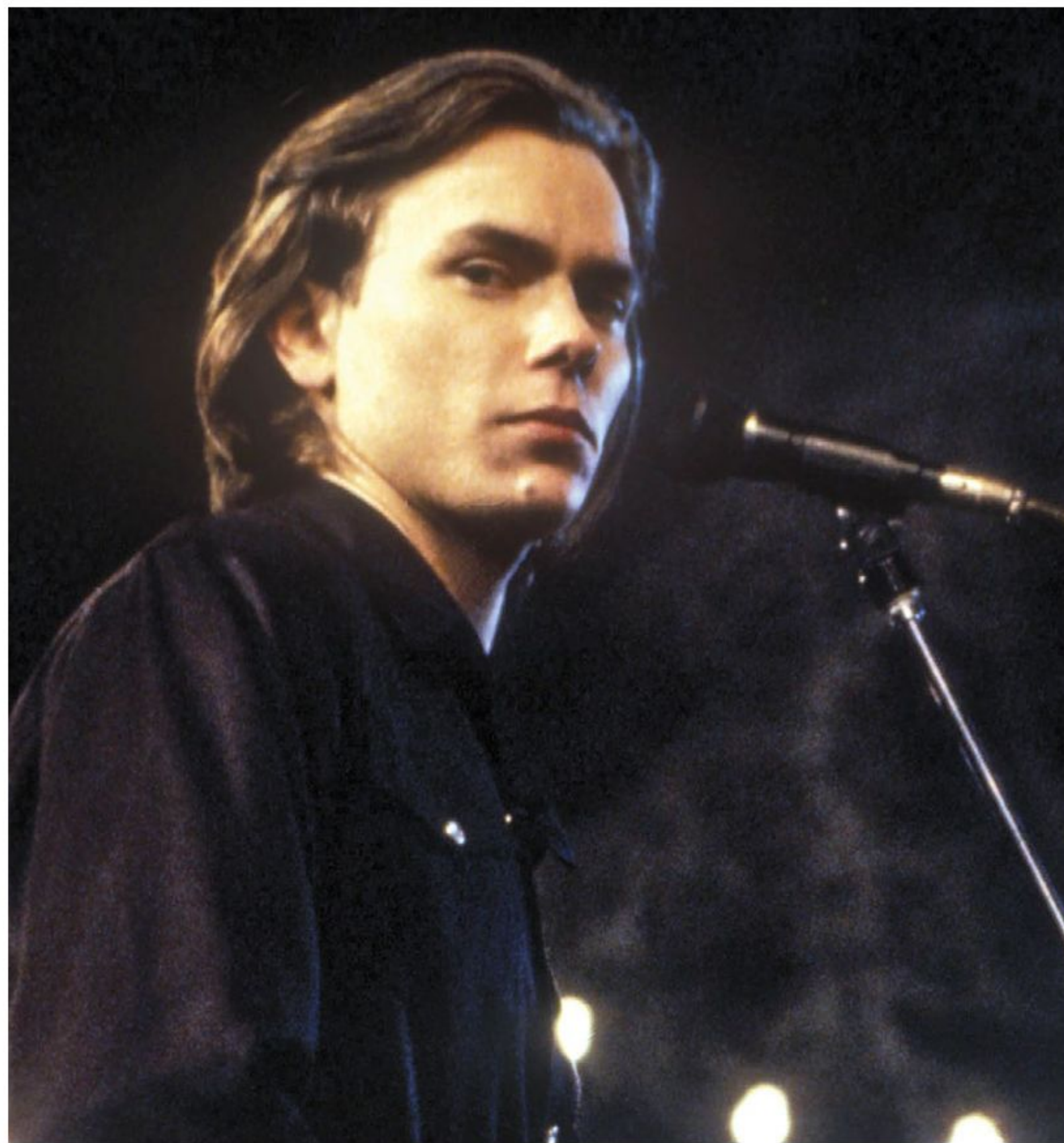
star Corey Feldman, River also took drugs for the first time, Feldman claiming they smoked spliffs together.

After *Stand By Me*, Phoenix headed to Belize to play Harrison Ford's tormented son in *The Mosquito Coast*. But during *Mosquito*'s jungle shoot he kicked against his real father's tense chaperoning (John was trying to talk his son into quitting Hollywood). At one point, director Peter Weir spotted his clean-living star scoffing Mars Bars when he thought no one was looking. But it turned out that teeth-rotting sweets were the least of Phoenix's worries. The shy, docile sensitivity that made him such a sought-after Hollywood commodity also revealed fatal cracks in his personality – as the deep-rooted pain of his bizarre hippie upbringing clashed with the enormous pressure of being his family's breadwinner.

lear persona and he's a very good actor, plus he is visually beautiful," gushed Lumet. "He ought to have a brilliant career." Phoenix showed up on Oscar night in a tux, with Plimpton and his mother on his arm. Many tipped him as favourite to win, but he lost to Kevin Kline's comedic gambolling in *A Fish Called Wanda*.

With his career shifting into overdrive, River played the teenage Indiana Jones for Spielberg in *The Last Crusade*, while the Phoenix clan decamped to a 20-acre compound just outside Gainesville, Florida. There, River began spending more time on his music, forming a band called Aleka's Attic and striking up friendships with REM frontman Michael Stipe and Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Off screen, he lamented the media objectification that came with being a teen





paean to beautiful, strung-out rebel boys on a spiritual quest for home, *My Own Private Idaho* stars Phoenix as narcoleptic rent-boy Mikey, alongside Keanu Reeves as a slumming rich kid. As the perpetually dazed hustler, Phoenix is disaffected, elusive, spaced-out. It's an extraordinary, instinctive performance – and he paid a heavy toll to extract it, immersing himself in Portland's street-kid culture before shooting started. "It's our responsibility to explore all the directions that might even be suggested in the script," he said later. "Our research was extra-curricular, it wasn't necessarily needed."

In light of later events, that comes as a painful admission, but Phoenix sank far enough into his messed up character that he was undoubtedly dabbling in heroin. For Phoenix, *Idaho* represented a delayed adolescence that he embraced with the exhilaration of a youth hanging out with cool, new friends he was desperate to impress. Only instead of a sneaky spliff, it was foil wraps of smack...

Junkies are notorious liars, and he joined the club on the *Idaho* publicity trail. "It would really frighten the hell out of me to be a creature walking around taking drugs," he fibbed. "Why throw a curve on life?" In the industry, however, Phoenix's smackhead reputation spread fast. Away from the nurturing cocoon of his family, he began patrolling the Sunset Strip's druggy rock 'n' roll scene. He seemed to know LA was a bad influence on him (during a brief hiatus on his last film, *Dark Blood*, he told director George Sluizer, "I'm going back to the bad, bad city") but was unable to resist its lure.

On his last two films, trouble was clearly afoot. Watch Phoenix's angry, mumbling performance in Peter Bogdanovich's country-western romance *The Thing Called Love* now, and you wonder why someone, anyone, didn't strong-arm him straight into rehab. On that fateful October night, he was 11 days shy of finishing *Dark Blood*, and due to go straight on to New Orleans to play the interviewer in

Interview With The Vampire. Creepily, in the last scene he ever filmed, Phoenix delivered the line, "I belong to another place. I'm in another world." Around 8pm, he went back to his hotel. Less than six hours later, he was dead.

DOOM ROOM

Sadly, River Phoenix's name today brings the instant, word-association response, "The Viper Room". The concrete pathway that played out his dying moments became a macabre LA tourist attraction, while the media seized on his death as headline news. It was a seismic event that signalled the ruthless ascendancy of celebrity culture, where hard-partying 'It' girls can shove G8 summits off the front pages. There was a feeble attempt to anoint him the new James Dean, but the days when a beautiful, brooding screen idol could become enshrined as legend no matter how sordid their earthly demise were gone and the Phoenix cult quickly faded.

His devastated family circled the wagons, initially denying River's drug problem. As it turned out, his system was swimming in eight times the lethal dosage of cocaine and four times that of heroin. Not counting *Dark Blood*, which had to be abandoned after his death, Phoenix appeared in 13 films in 13 years. His finest performances are testament to an actor able to convey pain, fragility and a wisdom beyond his years, but only *Stand By Me* could realistically be considered a classic. That most of his films are unremarkable has undoubtedly diluted his legacy.

"I love River's family. They brought him up to believe he was a pure soul who had a message to deliver to the world," ex-girlfriend Plimpton told *Esquire* a year after his death. "But they created this Utopian bubble so that River never socialised. He was never prepared for the world in which he'd have to deliver that message."

All his life, River Phoenix believed he was on a divine mission. But he wasn't the messiah. Just a very messed-up boy. 🍷

RIVER'S '80s FILMOGRAPHY

1982-1983 Seven Brides For Seven Sisters (TV Series)

1984 Celebrity (TV Mini-Series)

1984 Hotel (TV Series)

1985 Robert Kennedy And His Times (TV Mini-Series)

1985 Surviving (TV Movie)

1985 Explorers

1985 Family Ties (TV Series)

1986 Stand By Me

1986 Circle Of Violence: A Family Drama (TV Movie)

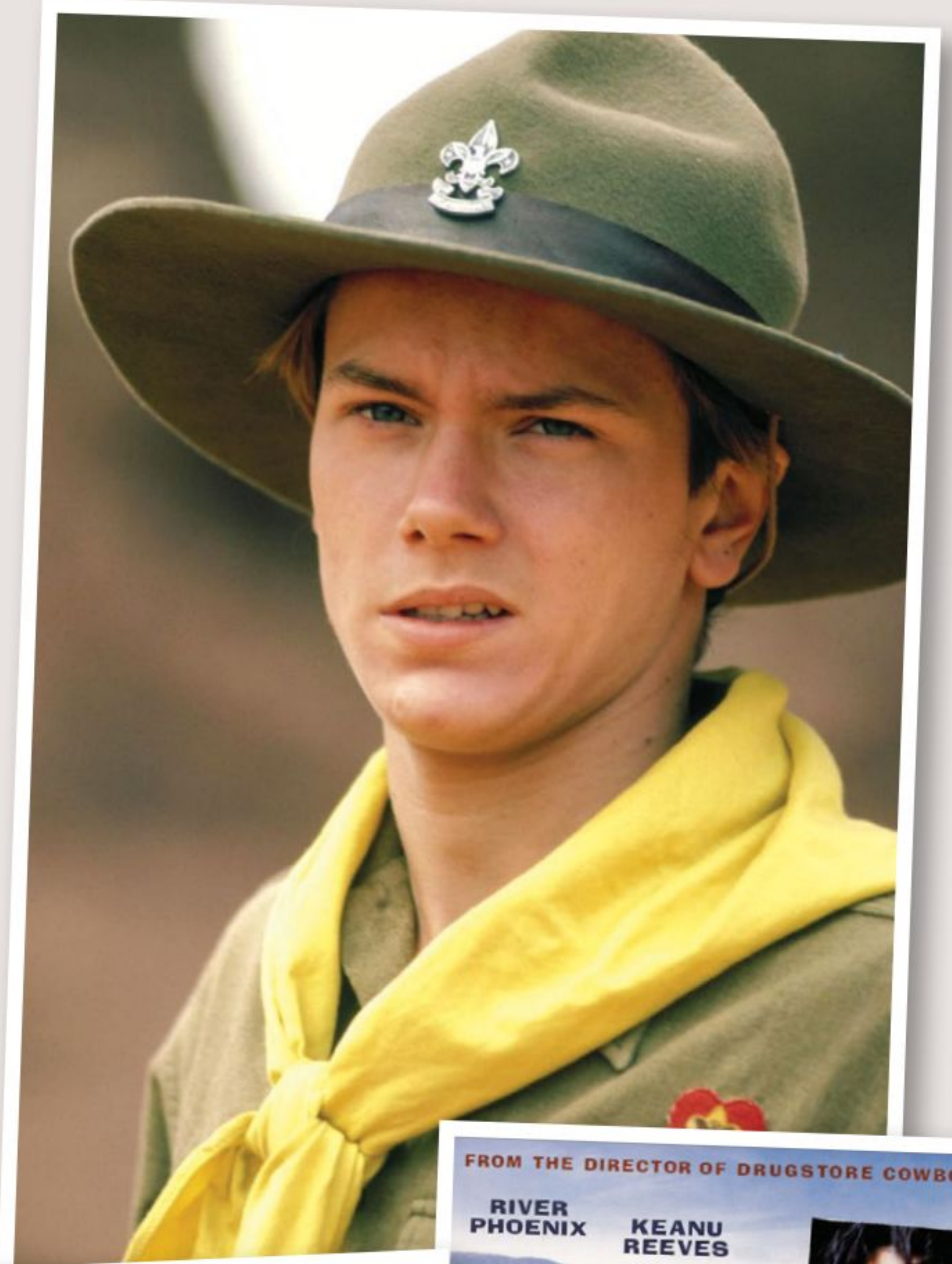
1986 The Mosquito Coast

1988 A Night In The Life Of Jimmy Reardon

1988 Little Nikita

1988 Running On Empty

1989 Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade





TEEN



VITAL STATS

YEAR 1987

DIRECTOR Joel Schumacher

SCREENPLAY Janice Fischer, James Jeremias, Jeffrey Boam

CAST Corey Feldman, Corey Haim, Edward Herrmann, Jason Patric, Kiefer Sutherland, Dianne Wiest

BUDGET \$8.5m

BOX OFFICE \$32m

RUNNING TIME 93 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Warner Bros

TAGLINE "Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire."

RELEASE DATE 31 July 1987

THE LOST BOYS

SLEEP ALL DAY. PARTY ALL NIGHT. IT'S FUN BEING A VAMPIRE... BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT'S TIME TO GROW UP? WE CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF **THE LOST BOYS** WORDS **SIMON BLAND**

Adolescence can be a tricky time. There's acne, angst and awkward encounters with the opposite sex to deal with, not to mention all the bloodsucking vampires knocking around. That was certainly the case for the cast of Joel Schumacher's seminal 1987 horror *The Lost Boys*. His tale of brothers Michael (Jason Patric) and Sam (Corey Haim) struggling to fit into their new beach community amid an epidemic of party-loving neck-biters flipped the coming-of-age genre on its head and gave vampires a much needed makeover. For its stars, this rollercoaster ride was cemented in celluloid history during one crazy summer in 1986 and as the film turns 30, it manages to evoke fond memories from those involved.

"I'd done a bunch of little things but this was a whole other level. I was over the moon," recalls Jamison Newlander on bagging the role of Alan Frog, one half of the film's vampire-hunting duo the Frog Brothers, alongside Corey Feldman's Edgar. "I had a sense early on that Joel had a vision because he was very confident in what he was looking for, but it wasn't until I was on set and saw what was going on that I really understood the vision he had for this new take on vampires."

DEAD COOL

Schumacher's undead revamp swapped capes, castles and Transylvania for motorcycles, metal music and the Santa Cruz boardwalk, renamed to become the fictional murder capital of the world, Santa Carla. "It was just clear that he wasn't going to make this teen exploitation movie but that he was aiming for something a little grander," says Alex Winter, who made his screen debut as Marko, right-hand vamp to Kiefer Sutherland's leader of the boardwalk bloodsuckers, David. "Make-up, attitude, physicality... I had a dance background and a motorcycle background so it was a good combination."

As for Schumacher's vision, Winter's NYU film school-trained eye spotted a few crucial influences,



not least from legendary cinematographer Michael Chapman. "I was a total pain in Michael Chapman's backside, I followed him around like a lapdog," laughs Winter. "I'd just come out of film school and this was the guy who shot *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and did camerawork on *Jaws*, one of the masters of cinematography," he explains. "As a cinephile, I see a lot of *Rebel Without A Cause*. I feel like there's this gothic horror stuff going on in there but there's no doubt that it was a product of the time."

That time was the late '80s, a period of partying, excess and dodgy haircuts but for *The Lost Boys* >>



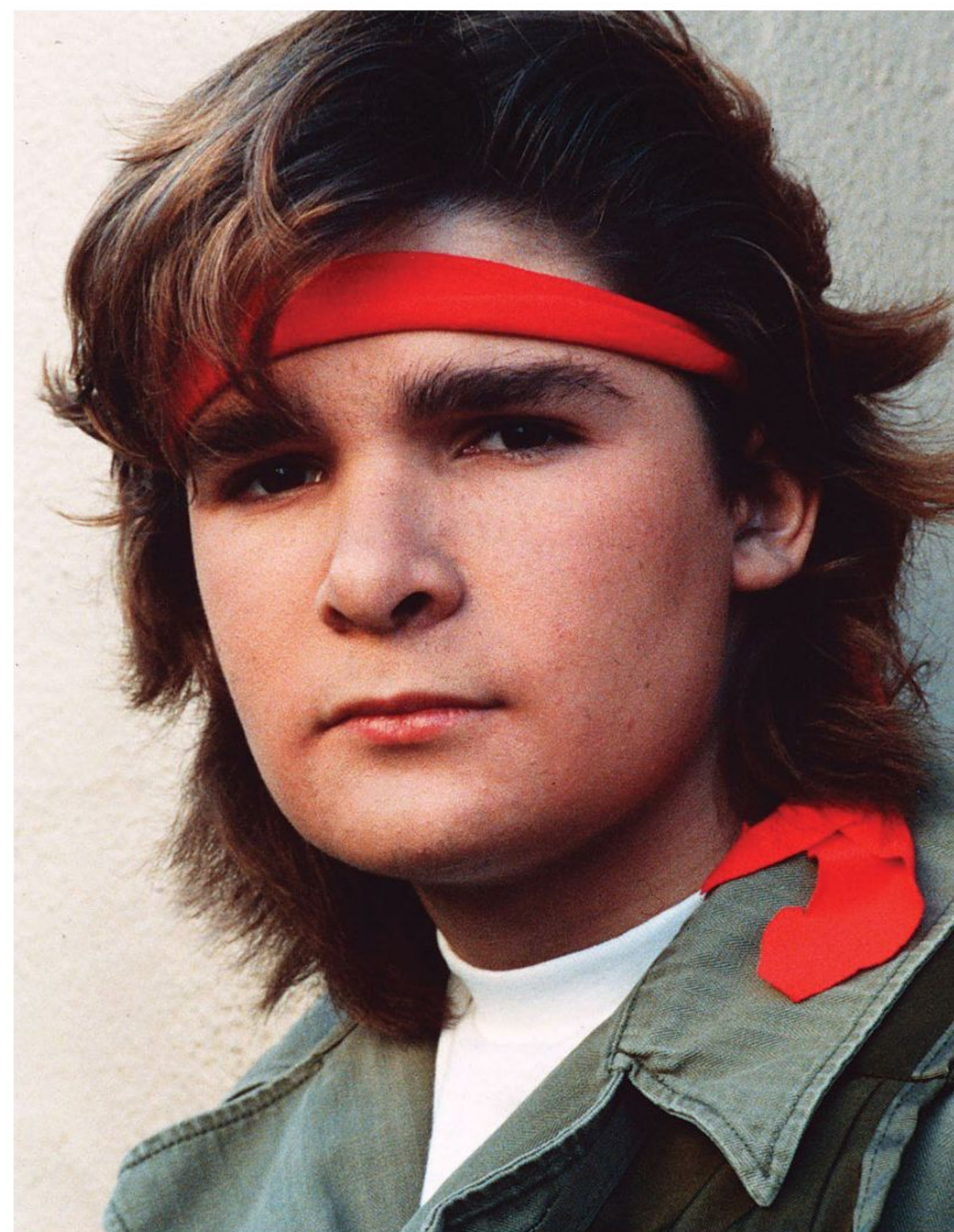
Vampire bustin': (above) it's always bloody in California, (left) Sam and the Frog Brothers



TEEN



It's fun being a vampire: (clockwise from top left) a member of the Santa Clara undead, Corey Feldman as one half of the Frog Brothers, a baby-faced teen heartthrob Corey Haim, "The blood-sucking Brady Bunch!"



cast it was also a time for bonding. "We basically met in the hallway about to go in to read for Joel," says Newlander on meeting his fellow Frog Brother Corey Feldman. "Immediately there was a rapport. I could tell he was just a good guy. Joel really wanted us to be like Clint Eastwood or Sylvester Stallone – really straight. He didn't want us playing for the comedy at all and I think that paid off. We were just these badass little kids on this mission and I really bought into that."

The chemistry flowed off-screen too, with Newlander, Feldman and Corey Haim spending hours together between scenes during the film's summertime shoot. "Feldman and I ended up hanging out a lot on set and off, so when we weren't shooting we had some pretty clean fun riding our bikes around Santa Cruz. Corey Haim and I also got really close," recalls Newlander. "Haim was just a really sweet guy and as wild as he was, we had a lot of clean fun as well. I was there when the Coreys began. That was their first movie together and it was this weird dichotomy where they were these stars and you could tell they were on the rise but they were also kids," he reflects. "I was 15 when it started and just a bit of a regular kid and they had that side too. We hung out a lot all through that summer."

Meanwhile, the film's older cast of vampires including Winter, Brooke McCarter, Billy Wirth and

leader Kiefer Sutherland were having a very different experience. "I've heard since that they had parties every night, all night long and I kind of missed that," admits Newlander. "It wasn't like they had lots of lines, it was just this feel that they brought to the screen and so for them I think the set was an extension of that. I think that's part of the edge that the film has."

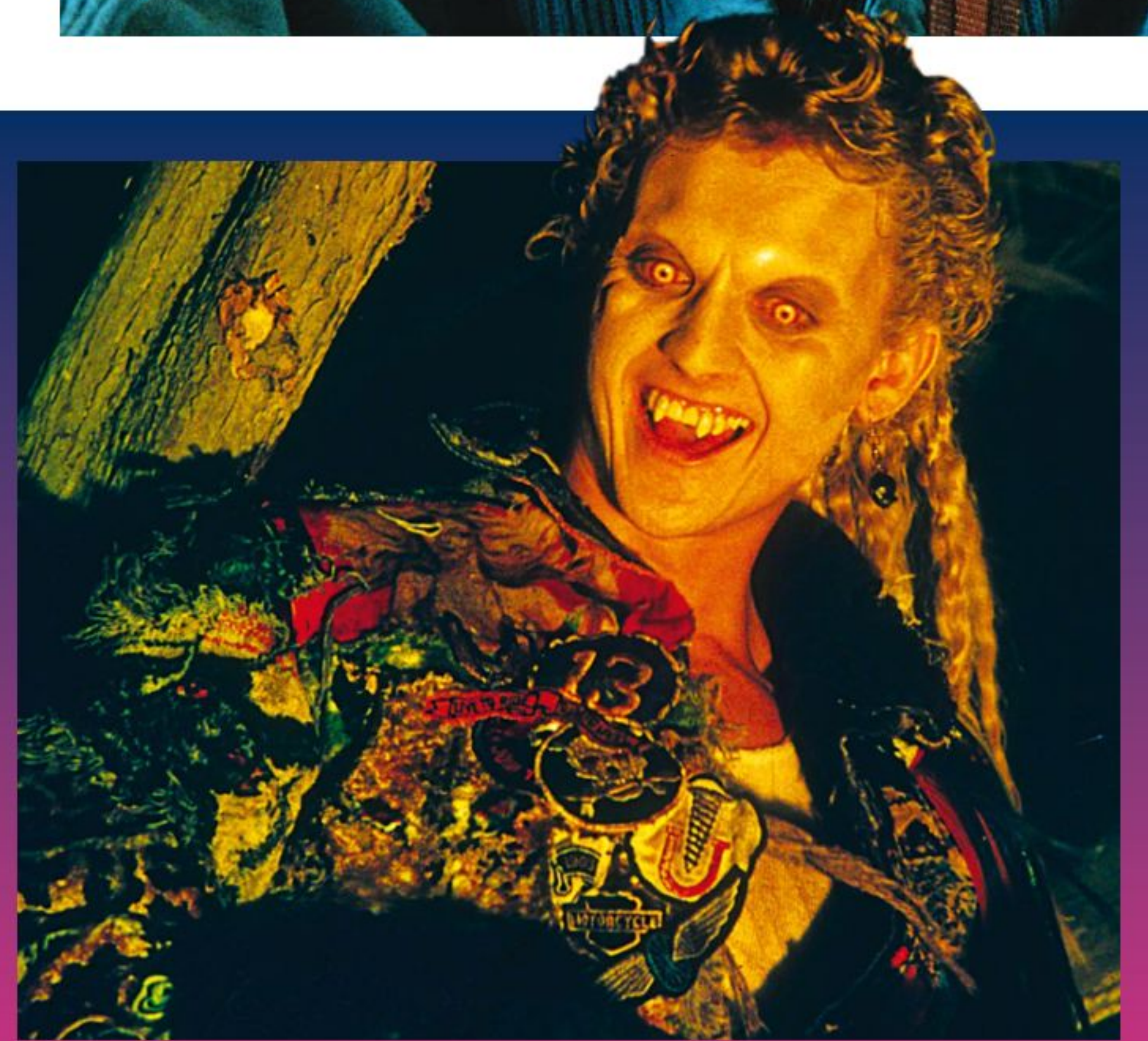
As one of the film's vampire entourage, Winter has his own take on the film's summer shoot. "There were two different movies," he reasons. "There are



A KILLER LOOK

IMMORTAL NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE...

With *The Lost Boys*, director Joel Schumacher reinvented vampires for a new generation, complete with a punk-rock aesthetic and some very '80s threads. "Joel came from a fashion background so look was something he was very good at and something he put a lot of time into," says Winter. "The type of motorcycle we rode, how we were dressed... Suzi Becker did the wardrobes. She's kind of a genius. The stuff she put together for us was pretty amazing," he recalls. "It was all very holistically designed and honestly that's why I feel the movie holds up after all these years."



FINDING THE FROGS

FROG BROTHERS STICK TOGETHER, EVEN IN THE CASTING ROOM...

While Corey Feldman was already a recognised face in kids movies of the '80s, Jamison Newlander was a newcomer to the scene. Thankfully, his newfound Frog Brother had his back during the audition process, ultimately helping him get the role of one of Santa Carla's premiere disposers of the Undead. "They basically read every kid my age in LA and New York," says Newlander on the audition process. "Afterwards they asked Corey: 'Of all the people we've seen, who do you like playing off of the most?' and he said Jamie. I think that was a big factor in me getting the part."

Blood brothers: the Frog Brothers leap into the fray.



'THIS WASN'T GOING TO BE A TEEN EXPLOITATION MOVIE - IT WAS SOMETHING GRANDER'

two worlds that Michael is being pulled between: the normal world of family and daytime and then the dark nighttime world of vampires. Not only is that the world I inhabited shooting wise, it's the world I inhabited story-wise so I had very little scenes with Jamie and Corey even though we were all hanging out together all the time," explains Winter. "We started out on location in Santa Cruz and we were

there for a long time doing all these scenes where me, Kiefer, Brooke and Billy are riding motorcycles and hanging out in the cave. We were just together all the time. It was a very communal set. I think that's largely due to the way Joel runs things because that's not the way they always are. We got up to shoot at night and went to bed at dawn. It was a wild summer and a lot of fun."

FANG GANG

Since its release in 1987, *The Lost Boys* has taken on an afterlife all of its own. Maybe the film's comedic tilt is to blame, maybe it's the endlessly quotable lines (Maggots? Nope, "they're only noodles, Michael!") or perhaps it's that greased-up sax player at the beginning? Winter and Newlander have their own theories: "I think what hits people most was how sexy it was and how it was this different take on vampires that was purposely young. It has this raw sex appeal," says Newlander. "I remember when I first went to college and there were people in a dorm room watching *The Lost Boys* and they were loving it. Then someone told them who I was and they all went nuts. That's when I had a sense that, 'Okay, this film is impacting people'. Then at the 20-year mark I

started doing conventions and that's when it hit me in a whole new way."

"To be honest with you, I noticed right away," admits Winter. "It wasn't a gazillion-dollar hit but it was a hit and it was a sleeper hit right away. I would say that once the DVD market really took off that's when it became clear that it had legs and that it was this DVD and cable go-to," he suggests. "I was getting a lot of fan mail about it and it seemed to have really taken ahold. Now there's this '80s and '90s nostalgia and it seems to really be something that holds up, which is obviously something you have no control over or expectations about when you make a movie. It's not expected."

You only have to look at today's pop-culture world to get a sense of the significance *The Lost Boys* still holds 30 years after its release but what does it mean to those who lived through Santa Carla's brush with the undead? "I remember it as the last great summer of my youth in a way, given the age that I was and the big family, carnival craziness of the shoot. I have an extremely fond memory of that summer and fall," says Winter candidly. "Adulthood took over after that. In terms of the details of my life, it was growing up time and it really was this swan song of youth. It was a great way to go out."

Newlander has similar thoughts. "30 years later, it's now a really interesting and pivotal time in my life where I got to be part of something really big and it's the closest I've got to the world of Hollywood that I envisioned as a kid. That was a time where I got to be there. We did it somehow and I'm really proud of that." He pauses briefly. "In my life, out of all of the different things I am: a dad, an actor, a writer... to be a Frog Brother is pretty cool." 🐸





TEEN

Fruits of his labour:
Lardass gorges on
blueberry pies at the
Tri-County Pie Eat.



ALL ABOUT HEAVE

Stand By Me | Cinema's greatest gag reel...

Sun-blushed and sadness-tinged, Rob Reiner's 1950s-set coming-of-age drama *Stand By Me* (1986), adapted from Stephen King's quasi-autobiographical story *The Body*, is full of digressions because everyone, from reminiscing writer Gordie Lachance (Richard Dreyfuss) to his

younger self (Wil Wheaton), wants to postpone its inevitable, tragic end. By far the most colourful is Gordie's campfire tale of Davy "Lardass" Hogan (Andy Lindberg), a put-upon, portly chap who enters the Tri-County Pie Eat with a plan for revenge that's best served lukewarm...



1 Just before the eating contest, Lardass necks his secret weapons: a bottle of castor oil and a raw egg.



2 The crowd catcall as Lardass takes the stage and sits down to eat ("Boom-baba-boom-baba!")...



3 ...but when the pie snuffling gets underway, victory looks certain for Lardass, and the crowd start chanting his name.



4 Then those secret weapons take effect. Belching, then tottering woozily to his feet, Lardass lets loose a cascade of purple sick...



5 ...starting a chunderous chain reaction that engulfs everyone in "a complete and total barf-o-rama".



6 Lardass sits triumphant in front of the crowd, but Gordie's friends want more. Turns out they can't bear the story to end either... **Matt Glasby**

THE ACTOR

A community theatre performer from Portland, Lindberg auditioned thinking he might play Vern (Jerry O'Connell's role). He was both dismayed and delighted to get the part of Lardass: "For better and for worse, [playing Lardass] has shaped my life," he says. "Certainly for better it has opened doors, opened the hearts of strangers, and perhaps for worse it has set a very high bar for what I consider 'success'."

THE PREP

For the castor oil (actually water and cola) and egg cutaways, Lindberg tried breaking the egg on his forehead, but it burst all over his face. He swallowed five raw eggs before they got the shot.

1



THE EDIT

Reiner considered cutting the scene, figuring Gordie was meant to be a talented writer. He changed his mind when he realised this is exactly what a talented kid might come up with. His intuition paid off. "It's one of the most memorable scenes in the movie," he says. "People love it. They went hysterical when they screened it." And the film overall got the King thumbs-up: "It seemed to me that *Stand By Me* was the first really completely successful adaptation of my work."

THE COSTUME

To bulk up for the role, Lindberg wore a padded fat suit under size 60 jeans. No shoes fit him, so he wore his own trainers, which ended up covered in “puke”. (FYI: King has described himself as “a fat kid... ‘husky’ was the euphemism they used”.)

THE PIES

Hundreds of fresh pies were delivered to the set each day filled with blueberry and cottage cheese. Lindberg cut his face on the rock sugar topping.

THE CROWD

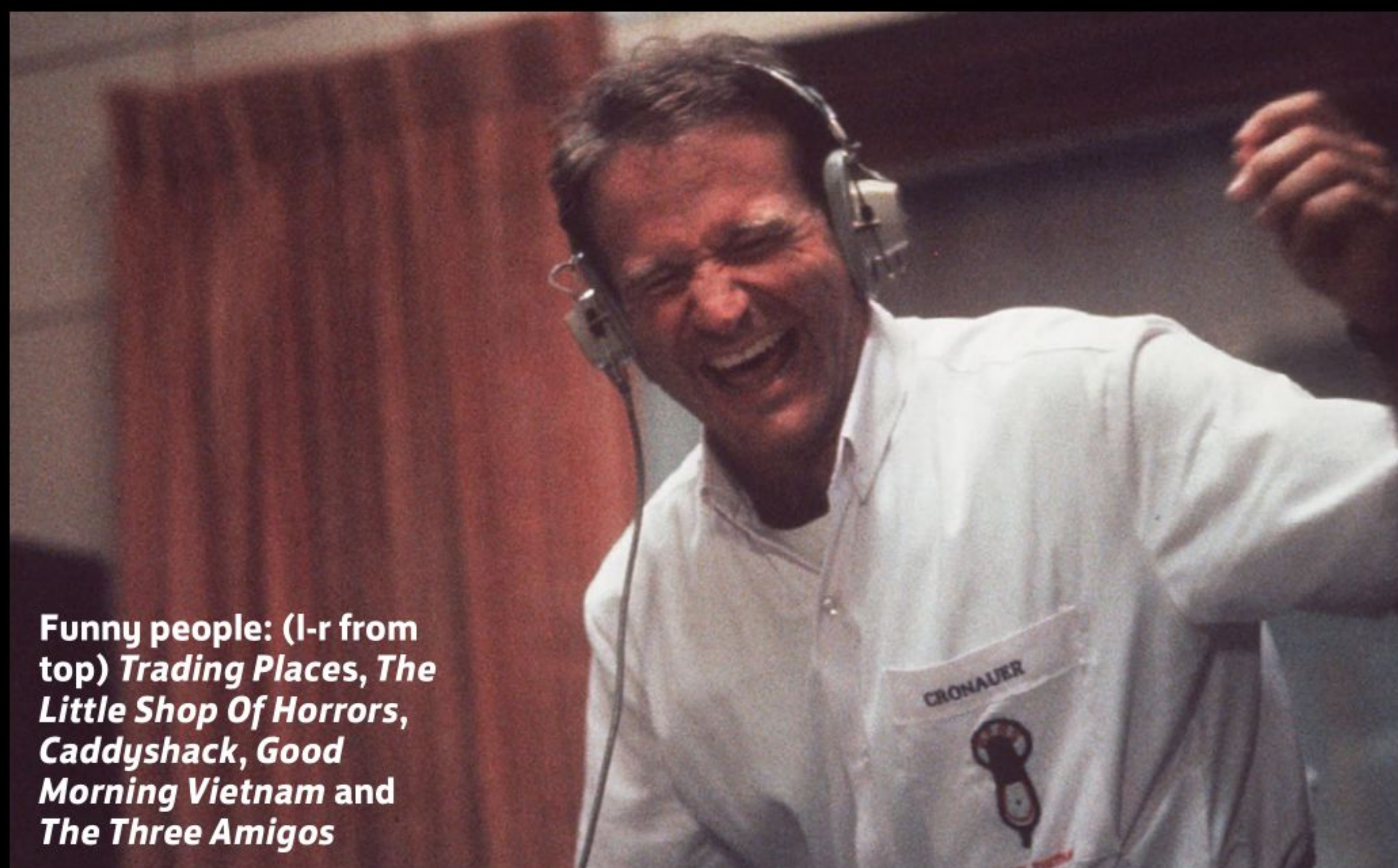
For the final barf-orama, the extras were given numbered bags full of fake sick. They held the mixture in their mouths until their number was called, then let rip. One child threw up for real.

THE BURP

Lindberg was given a cup of cold pie filling to dribble. Despite several days of face-first guzzling, this was the only moment he was nearly sick.

THE VOMIT

Retch-rigs were built whereby, when the plunger was pushed, vomit would spray through a hose taped to the vomiter's face. Often it seems to spurt from anywhere but their mouths. "It was pretty cheesy the way we did the throw-up stuff," says Reiner. "You can almost see the tubes."



Funny people: (l-r from top) *Trading Places*, *The Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Caddyshack*, *Good Morning Vietnam* and *The Three Amigos*



THE **KINGS** OF COMEDY

The '80s was a trailblazing decade for big-screen laughs, with funnymen from the stand-up circuit, TV sitcoms and risk-taking sketch shows changing the face of film comedy forever...

WORDS RYAN GILBEY

American film comedy reached new heights in the '80s. As Pauline Kael observed when looking back on the decade, "The only really fresh element in the American movies of the '80s may be what Steve Martin, Bill Murray, Bette Midler, Richard Pryor, Robin Williams and other comedians brought to them." There might be movies from that period that have lost their sheen, but it would take a particularly steely viewer not to double up in response to at least a few of the hit comedies from that decade: *Stripes*, *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*, *The Man With Two Brains*, *Roxanne*, *Trading Places*, *Down And Out In Beverly Hills*, *Splash*, *Ghostbusters*, *Caddyshack*, *Stir Crazy*. Not a bad strike rate. So where did it all come from?

One plentiful source was the TV sketch show *Saturday Night Live*, which first screened in October 1975. It was the brainchild of producer Lorne Michaels, who wanted to combine the energy of live stand-up with the subversive, surreal nature of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. The show was consigned by its network, NBC, to 11.30pm every Saturday, but Michaels used this time slot to his advantage, sanctioning risky

material that would never have made the cut earlier in the evening. Michaels plucked the initial company of players from club acts and revue performers, some of whom had cut their teeth on the National Lampoon touring revue shows.

That first cast — including Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi, Chevy Chase and Jane Curtin — was dubbed the 'Not Ready For Prime-Time Players'. What they served up was a deliberately edgy alternative to everything else on TV — the spirit of the comedy was counter-cultural and rebellious, and quickly fostered a cult following. Politicians were skewered mercilessly (see Dan Aykroyd's faultless Jimmy Carter impression or Bill Murray spoofing Ted Kennedy), rock stars parodied and popular new characters (John Belushi as a Samurai warrior and Chevy Chase's smarmy anchorman, for example) rolled out every week.

But regardless of the sketches, it was the performers whom audiences got to know; they responded to the laidback goofiness of these not-quite stars, with their unpredictable bursts of energy, their refreshing impertinence and their devilish manner. Aykroyd was the clipped, bookish straight-arrow, good at playing wheedlers and stiffs; Chase was an oily schmoozer, who

trotted out his showbiz patter beneath a protective layer of irony ("I'm Chevy Chase. And you're not" was his typical sign-off line). If Curtin's prim-but-endearing turns on the show are less widely remembered, that may be because she didn't progress to a movie career that consolidated her fame in the manner of her male co-stars — in itself an indictment of Hollywood's failure to make the most of its promising female performers.

But it was Belushi who was the lifeblood of early *SNL*. Bustling with frantic energy that jarred with his plump frame, he was the spirit of anarchy and live television was his natural home. In fact, while he was the first *SNL* member to have a huge movie hit on his hands — *National Lampoon's Animal House* in 1978 — he was also strangely unlucky in never finding another film in his brief life that could accommodate his raucous persona. *The Blues Brothers* was a tiring piece of work, funny only in theory, while *Neighbors*, an attempt to reunite Belushi and Aykroyd for a second time, was notable for its weird lack of gags.

The connection between *SNL* and Hollywood was established fairly early in the show's history, when several performers accepted film offers in the late '70s. Movies themselves had emulated >>



Bringing down the house: Tom Hanks in *The Money Pit*, (far right) Steve Martin in *The Man With Two Brains*

the SNL skit-heavy formula, with X-rated sketch compendiums such as *Kentucky Fried Movie* (1977) and *Loose Shoes* (1980) pulling in healthy box-office numbers. A pattern emerged, though, in the late '70s that saw SNL performers begin to defect to Hollywood after a few years service, leaving the show in a state of flux. It happened with Chase, Belushi, Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner (and later, to Mike Myers, Will Ferrell, Chris Rock and Adam Sandler). *The Blues Brothers* (Aykroyd and Belushi) and *This Is Spinal Tap* (Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Harry Shearer) made their debuts on the show long before they were the subjects of feature films. Everyone who was someone, or wanted to be, did a stint on this hugely influential show.

Alumni of the show began converging in Hollywood, creating a sprawling family tree of comic practitioners. Harold Ramis, who had written 1979's *Meatballs*, Bill Murray's first lead role, co-wrote and directed the golf comedy *Caddyshack* (1980), which provided Chevy Chase with his second lead (after co-starring with Goldie Hawn in 1978's *Foul Play*), as well as scene-stealing support for Murray as a deranged greensman. Ramis went on to direct another Chase vehicle, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, in 1983, and to co-write *Ghostbusters* the following year, also starring in the film with Aykroyd and Murray.

Of these, only one still has what might be called a glowing career: Bill Murray. No SNL graduate has ever achieved a career as inspired as his. Eddie Murphy was a box-office phenomenon

“THE MAIN COMIC FORCE OF THE '80s WAS STEVE MARTIN, WHO EARNED WIDESPREAD RESPECT FOR HIS STRAIGHT-FACED SHOWBIZ ROUTINES BEFORE STARRING IN HIS FIRST MOVIE”

in the mid-'80s, following *48 Hrs* (1982), *Trading Places* (1983) and the massively successful *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984). But Murphy made some rum choices and only returned to favour recently, this time as a wholesome family entertainer. While Chase burnt out after a string of moderate hits (*Fletch*, *Three Amigos!*), some duds (*Spies Like Us*) and at least two *Vacation* instalments too many, Murray badgered away, unchanging in his seedy, couldn't-care-less persona.

He has the moroseness of Buster Keaton, the misanthropy of WC Fields and the moral framework of Homer Simpson. His gleefully disreputable turns in *Caddyshack*, *Stripes* and later *Groundhog Day* are like antidotes to be taken immediately after watching Orlando Bloom. Hell, even a Murray cameo, like those in *Tootsie* or *Little Shop Of Horrors*, can light up the auditorium. Most importantly, there was never anything needy about him; rather than hankering after fame and success, he waited for them to come to him. And when he became

a sarcastic superstar on the back of *Ghostbusters*, he fled the limelight to study philosophy.

Later, he reinvented himself as a melancholy clown – “the crying-on-the-inside kind,” as he says in 1990's *Quick Change* – and found that some of the most intuitive US directors, like Sofia Coppola, Wes Anderson and Jim Jarmusch, were happy to peg entire movies on that persona. His patience, as he calmly watched Chase, Murphy and Belushi hit the big time, paid off.

Naturally, there were comedians who became successful in movies of the '80s without the springboard of SNL. Some crossed over from sitcoms to movies: Danny DeVito had starred in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and Jack Nicholson's comic Western *Gain' South* (1978) with John Belushi. But it was the hit sitcom *Taxi* that really launched his film career in the '80s, when he gave audience-pleasing performances in *Romancing The Stone* (1984), *Ruthless People* (1986) and *Throw Mamma From The Train* (1987) among others. The latter starred another fugitive from

THE COMEDY STORE

Key laugh lines from the decade...

THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS (1983)

Dolores Benedict (Kathleen Turner): "What are those assholes doing on the porch?"
Dr Hfuhruhurr (Steve Martin): [laughing fondly] "Those aren't assholes. It's pronounced 'azaleas'."

CADDYSHACK (1980)

Al Czervik (Rodney Dangerfield): "I hear this place is restricted, Wang, so don't tell 'em you're Jewish, okay?"

STRIPES (1981)

John Winger (Bill Murray): "The army's my only hope."
Russell Ziskey (Harold Ramis): "You could join a monastery."
Winger: "You ever see a monk get wildly fucked by some teenage girls?"
Ziskey: "No."
Winger: "So much for the monastery."

TRADING PLACES (1983)

Billy Ray Valentine (Eddie Murphy): "When I was growing up, if we wanted a jacuzzi, we had to fart in the tub."

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION (1983)

Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase): [to his family] "We're 10 hours from the fucking fun park and you want to bail out. Well I'll tell you. This is no longer a vacation. It's a quest. It's a quest for fun. I'm gonna have fun and you're gonna have fun. We're all gonna have so much fucking fun we'll need plastic surgery to remove our goddamn smiles. You'll be whistling 'Zip-A-Dee Doo-Dah' out of your assholes!"

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY (1989)

Harry Burns (Billy Crystal): "Right now everything's great, everyone's happy, everyone's in love. But you gotta know that sooner or later you'll be screaming at each other about who's gonna get this dish. This eight dollar dish will cost you a thousand dollars in phone calls to the legal firm of That's Mine, This Is Yours."



sitcomland, Billy Crystal, who had made a big impression as Jody the gay son in the long-running and controversial comedy *Soap*.

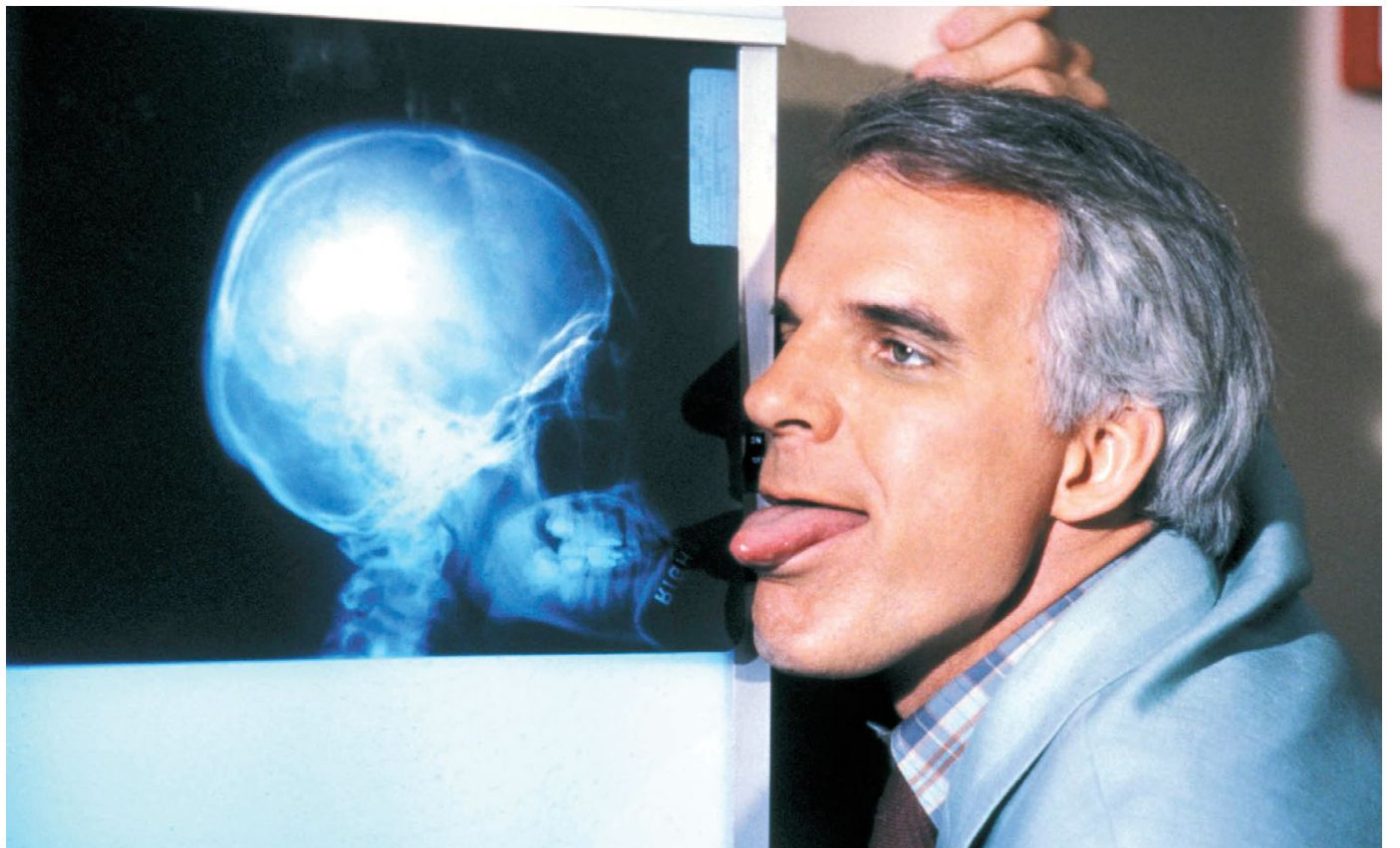
By the end of the '80s, Crystal had charmed his way through *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), one of the most influential comedies of the decade, and Tom Hanks became another great sitcom-to-movie success story, graduating from TV's *Bosom Buddies* to become a fuse comic lead in *Splash* (1984), *The Money Pit* (1986) and especially *Big* (1988).

Other than Eddie Murphy, the main comic force of the '80s was Steve Martin. He may have notched up the record for most appearances as the host of *SNL*, but he was never actually a cast member. In fact, he'd worked the stand-up circuit for many years, and earned widespread respect in the industry for his straight-faced showbiz routines, well before he wrote and starred in his first vehicle, *The Jerk* in 1979, still the purest distillation of his demented genius.

It was brave of him to follow this with a fiercely downbeat film version of Dennis Potter's BBC drama *Pennies From Heaven* – arguably one of the most underrated films of the '80s – but soon he was back to the job of building his comic persona, delivering one tour de force after another in *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982), *The Man With Two Brains* (1983), *All Of Me* (1984) and *Roxanne* (1986), all but the last of which were presided over by director Carl Reiner.

A sign of the softening-to-come in Steve Martin's sensibility arrived when he starred with John Candy in the sentimental comedy *Planes, Trains And Automobiles* (1987). From there it was just a few small steps to the post of entertainer-without-integrity that has lead him to say "yes" to *Cheaper By The Dozen*, *Sgt Bilko*, *The Pink Panther...* And unfortunately, the list goes painfully on and on.


What is it about those trailblazing comedians of the '80s that has made so many of them seek refuge in the safe haven of family entertainment?



In the case of Eddie Murphy (*Shrek*, *The Haunted Mansion*), it suggests some form of penance for the raging misogyny and homophobia displayed in his concert film *Raw* (1987) and his ill-fated directorial debut *Harlem Nights* (1989).

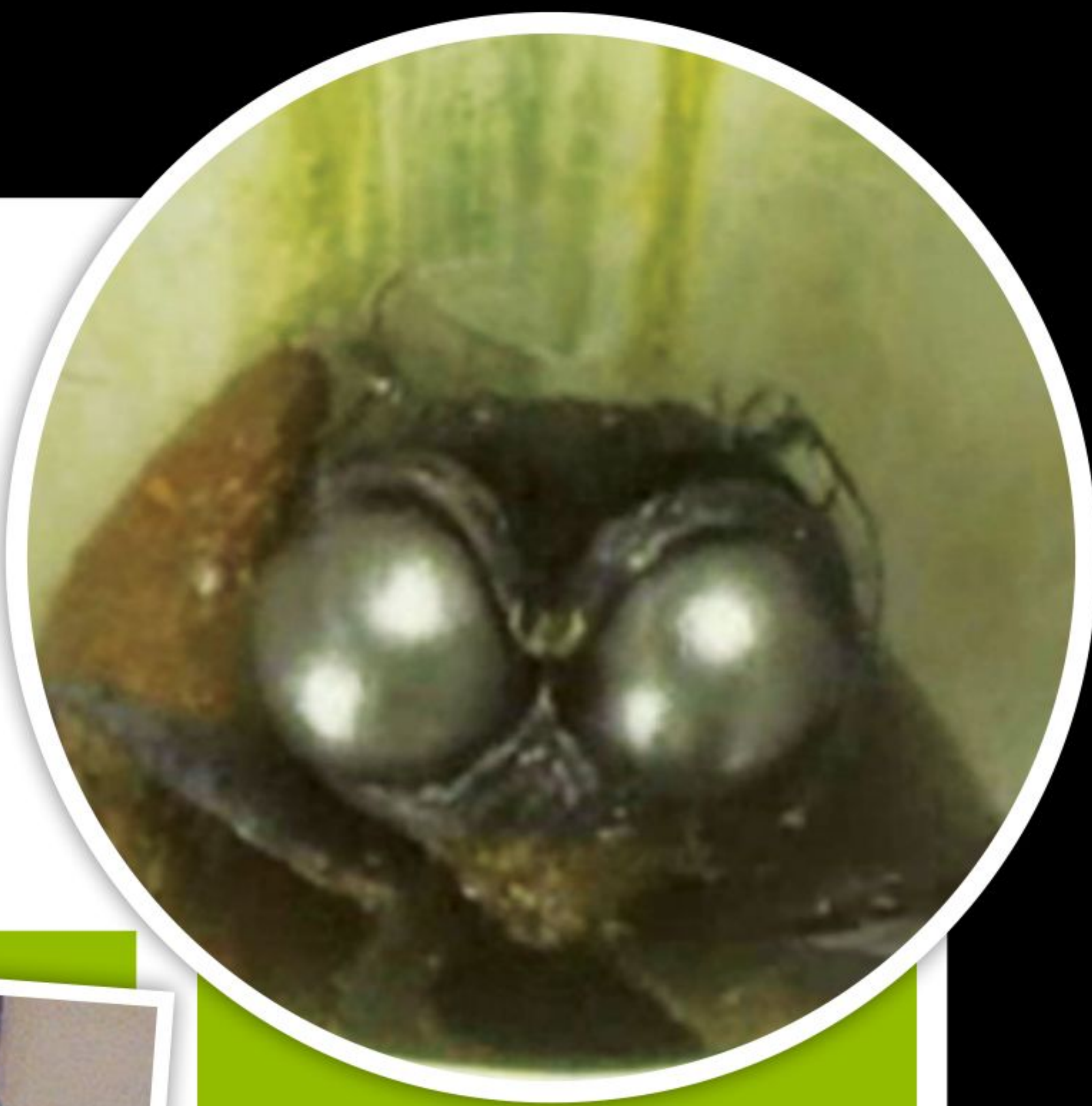
Perhaps Steve Martin labours under the misapprehension that he is enlivening those inane family comedies, rather than tarnishing his own reputation. A similar decline was evident in the comedy films of the late, great Robin Williams, another red-hot '80s performer who came to cinemas after the smash success of his stand-up routines and the sitcom *Mork & Mindy*. Williams proved from the beginning that he was a superb actor – check out the witty defection comedy *Moscow On The Hudson* (1984) for evidence. But his comic reputation in '80s movies rests on only a few films: *The Survivors* (1983), *The Best Of Times* (1986), *Club Paradise* (1986) and *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), only the latter making any waves at the box office.

More significant, perhaps, was the candour he displayed in his stand-up routines in which he spoke about his cocaine habit. After the death of John Belushi in 1982 from a heroin and cocaine overdose, and the resulting fall-out from *Wired*, Bob Woodward's scandalous expose of how Hollywood had colluded in Belushi's downfall, this was exactly the kind of frankness needed to clear the air.

Not that it should have been altogether surprising that in a decade defined by excess and hedonism, drug-taking was such an institutional part of success. Comedians of every stripe found themselves celebrated, even deified, in '80s Hollywood. And anyone who makes a living out of courting the laughter and approbation of millions of strangers is likely to have a necessarily addictive and insecure personality. The real drugs were laughter, fame and approval. And they still remained long after every burnt-out star had checked out of rehab. 

BAD TASTE

Put your sick-triggers on stun as we count down **10 yuck moments** from the decade...



10 Airplane!

1980

Only the immature brains of director Jim Abrahams and the Zucker brothers would take the phrase "when the shit hits the fan" and push it to its literal extreme. So there's cackling and nausea as Robert Stack utters the dreaded phrase and a curly arse-sausage flies through the air, splatting into a whirring fan with a hefty thud.

9 Withnail & I

1987

It's down to a humble egg to supply *Withnail* with its most revolting moment. As Paul McGann sits in a dismal London cafe, a hoary old warthog slobbers over a fried egg sandwich. Even the most concrete stomach would crumble at the resulting yolk spunking 'twixt bread, as London's ugliest lady applies her mushy lips to the job of eating.



8 RoboCop

1987

Career criminal Emil has just had a 50-gallon drum of toxic waste dumped over him. Staggering about with the grace of an Action Man tap-dancing in front of a fire, his dip-fried reactions fail to get him out of the way of his partner-in-crime's speeding car. Result? Only a man-shaped, 150lb pink custard pie.



5 Videodrome

1983

James Woods is hallucinating thanks to the evil vibes from his TV, fusing the mechanical with the visceral in a subconscious desire to merge his finite subjective reality into the world behind the screen (it's a David Cronenberg film). Scratching a tummy itch with a handgun, Woods' hungry belly gapes open and gobbles up the gun, causing Woods to blunder about with a "Where's my pistol?" scowl.



4 Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom

1984

Settling down for some din-dins at Pancok Place, Indy and guests chew their sleeves as a gut-bubbling menu of gastric abominations are dumped on the table: sicked-in beetle shells, slit-open snakes, potage à la slushy goat's eyes. But Spielberg really pulls the sick-trigger when the main course arrives – savoury chimp brains, ready to slurp from the money's just-murdered head.



6 Day Of The Dead

1985

It's the end of the world, and a final pocket of humanity is being snuffed out by a thousand drooling zombies. As the undead gorge, base commander Rhodes' escape is hindered when the coffin-dodgers tear his legs off and chew on his exposed tubes. "Choke on 'em!" he curses, as his legs are dragged off stage left.



3 Scanners

1981

Having volunteered himself for a demonstration in telepathic powers, Michael Ironside upstages his mentor by clenching his teeth and, eyes rolling, lips twitching, he invades the head of the professor, flinging some brainwaves into his skull and causing it to explode like a watermelon in a shooting gallery.



2 Monty Python's Meaning Of Life

1983

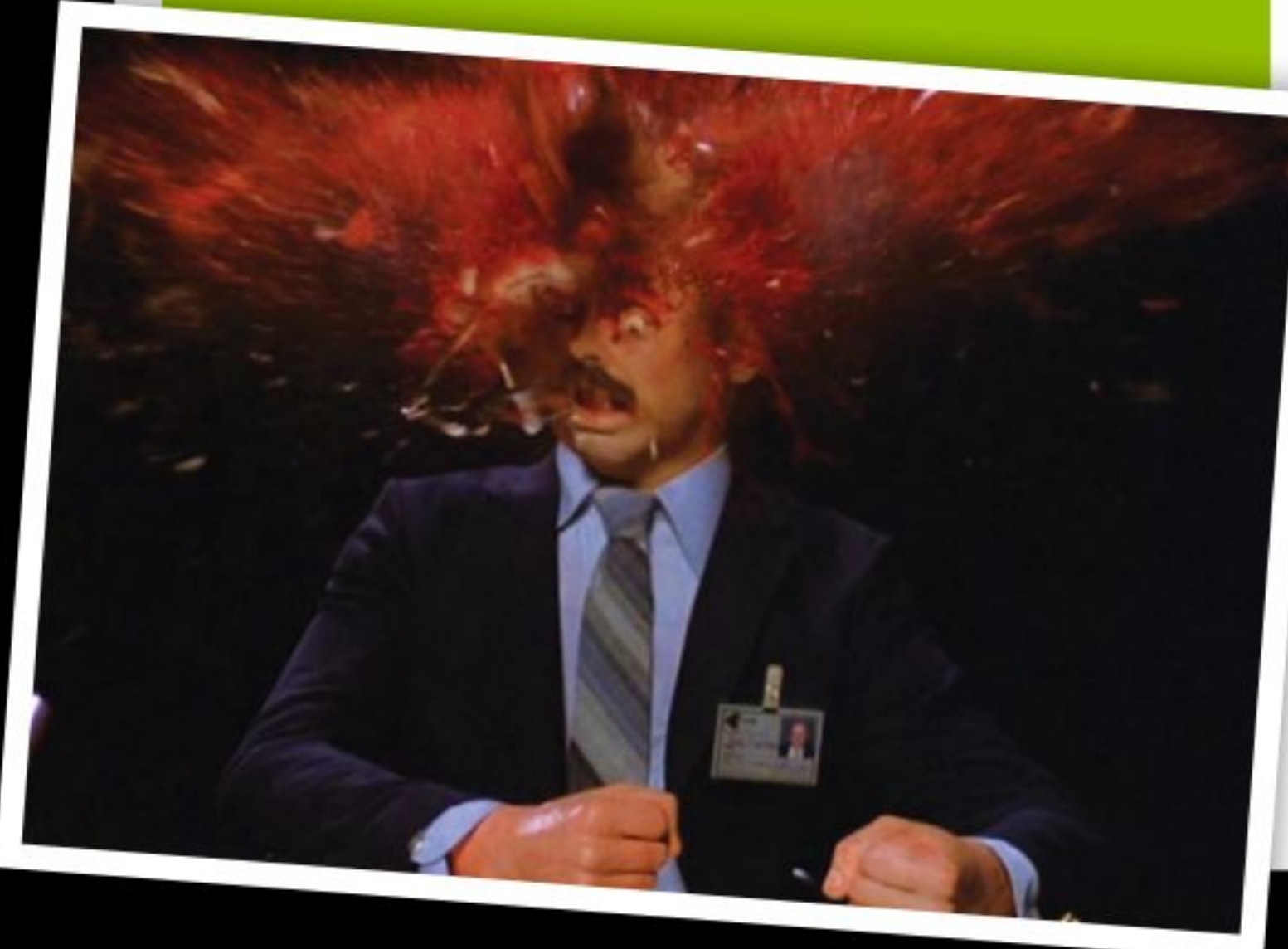
As the floor of the opulent French restaurant rumbles with his arrival, greasy slob-monster Mr Creosote plops himself downcalls for a bucket and showers the floor with chunks. He finally explodes after eating a "waffer-then mint", redecorating the restaurant with lumpy body bits.



1 Society

1989

The revolting finale to Brian Yuzna's horror sees hero Billy Warlock's suspicions that his family are mutated masons confirmed beyond his deepest fears when he walks in on an orgy of orifice-mashing and jammy arses. The most sickening moment comes with the major blurts, "Let's get to the bottom of this," to one of Billy's classmates, and promptly punches him a new asshole. The charmer. 



We love '80s... COMEDY

Drebin is the cop who fakes every orgasm



I haven't had this much sex since I was a Boy Scout leader!" announces Frank Drebin, drawing stunned silence from a crowded restaurant.

"I mean, I was dating a lot at the time..."

The late Leslie Nielsen's most famous character is deadpan comedy incarnate: an authority figure whose distinguished appearance (suited, silver-haired, paternalistic) makes his endless silliness all the funnier. Somewhere between a Canadian Clouseau and a bumbling Bogart, Lt. Drebin is one of the movies' finest idiots.

After years of playing it straight – most notably in *Forbidden Planet* (1956) and *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972) – Nielsen first turned to comedy in 1980, with Jim Abrahams and the Zucker brothers' *Airplane!*, a seminal spoof of '70s disaster flicks (like, for example, *The Poseidon Adventure*). Surely he couldn't be serious? He could, never once cracking a smile as the

absurdly literal-minded Dr. Rumack (and don't call him Shirley).

Realising what a perfect fit Nielsen's dust-dry delivery was for their goofy gags, Abrahams and the Zuckers created Frank Drebin – and the short-lived TV series *Police Squad!* (1982) – especially for him. The show died a quick death, but Drebin lived on – elevated to the big screen for three *Naked Gun* movies between 1988 and 1994.

Drebin's list of achievements over the years makes for quite a career. He saved the life of Queen Elizabeth. He disarmed a nuclear bomb. He even solved the Middle East crisis with a cup of coffee and two well-aimed fingers to the eyes of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Aping everything from *The Maltese Falcon* to *Dragnet*, Drebin's drawling voiceover leads us through the mean streets of LA, turning

crime scenes into cartoons and heartache into hilarity: "I loved her, but she had her music. I think she had her music. She'd hang out with the Chicago Male Chorus And Symphony. I don't recall her playing an instrument or being able to carry a tune. She was on the road 300 days of the year. In fact, I bought her a harp for Christmas and she asked me what it was..."

Drebin moves through a different world from everyone else around him, affected by inexplicable phenomena (like being slapped by a girl's mysterious third hand), not understanding a word that anyone says to him ("Would you like a nightcap?" "No, thank you. I don't wear them"), violently over-reacting and mixing his metaphors ("Looks like the cows have come home to roost..."). An antiquated archetype trapped

in the modern world, Drebin is the movie fan's comedy cop. But he appeals to everyone because he's just plain daft: farting in front of the mayor,

clutching at stone penises, knocking poor old Barbara Bush off a balcony...

"*The Naked Gun* is a film that's funny to a five-year-old," reflected Nielsen on his favourite role, "and when that five-year-old is nine years old there'll be other things that make them laugh. It goes on and on."

After the lazy script of *The Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult*, Drebin handed in his badge for the second time. Nielsen spent the rest of his career in a series of spoofs ranging from the unmemorable (*Spy Hard*, *Dracula: Dead And Loving It*) to the unforgivable (2001: *A Space Travesty*, *Stan Helsing*).

Interviewed a few months before his death in 2010, Nielsen was still hopeful of getting back on the *Squad!*. "There has been some talk," said the 84-year-old. "I never say never. Unless someone asks, 'When would you like to be slapped in the face with a cold flounder?'" **Paul Bradshaw**

'Drebin's saved the Queen, disarmed a nuclear bomb and even solved the Middle East crisis with a cup of coffee'



DISASTER MOVIES

"THIS IS GONNA BE A HIT!" THEY CRIED.
"THIS WILL DRAW THE CROWDS!" BUT
WHEN ALL WAS DONE AND DUSTED,
THE ONLY THING THESE '80s FILMS
ATTRACTED WAS THE BUZZ OF FLIES...

WORDS **CERI THOMAS**

HOWARD THE DUCK

"The film just about dies in its first 15 minutes... Daffy Duck will be pleased to hear he didn't miss any career opportunities." *VARIETY*

Year 1986 **Cost** \$52 million **US Gross** \$16.3 million

Anyone who watched the three *Star Wars* prequels and wondered how George Lucas made films so dull need look no further than this misguided attempt to turn a foul-mouthed '70s Marvel Comics superhero into some kind of duck-billed ET.

Lucas loved the stoner-age comic-book character – who vanished from print in 1981 after a dispute between Marvel and Howard's creator, Steve Gerber – and hired his pals Willard Hyuck and Gloria Katz (who had written *American Graffiti* for Lucas 15 years earlier) to bring Howard to the big screen.

With *Star Wars* revenues vanishing into the creation of his hi-tech personal headquarters, Skywalker Ranch, Lucas needed to replenish his coffers and was counting on his space-mallard epic to be a success. And what did he get for his money? A kids' movie about a punk girl from Ohio who wants to have sex with intergalactic waterfowl, featuring some of the most atrocious dialogue ever and lots of explosions and special effects.

Oh, and Howard is played by eight different little people. When *Duck* came out in the US in the summer of 1986, it was a box-office calamity. Lucas refused to give up, though, purging the adult humour and all mention of avian lifeforms for its European release. But *Howard: New Breed Of Hero* failed to restore any lustre to Lucas' turkey.



INCHON

"The worst movie ever made. A turkey the size of Godzilla." *NEWSWEEK*

Year 1981 **Cost** \$46 million **US Gross** \$5.2 million

This huge war turkey about the UN-led invasion to expel the communists from South Korea was conceived and bankrolled by Reverend Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church. The Red-hating Mr Moon reckons a commie-free Korea will be the spiritual centre of the world, with himself as the Saviour.

And he was happy to throw money at his epic, spending \$1.13 million on Terence Young, director of *Dr No* and *Thunderbolt*, and more on a bizarre cast including Jacqueline Bisset (\$1.7 million), Laurence Olivier (\$1.25 million), David Janssen and Ben Gazzara (\$800,000 after Nick Nolte turned down \$2 million).

The vivacious Bisset plays an interior decorator who happens to be in Korea buying antiques when the battle breaks out and spends the movie racing cross-country in a polka-dot bikini top, picking up orphans and dodging shells. The shoot suffered from Bisset's chronic illness; an earthquake that washed a 14-tonne camera crane out to sea; a pair of set-destroying typhoons called Judy and Irving; and the language barrier.

After three years to get the Korean scenes, production upped sticks to Rome for interiors. All this for a B-grade epic about a conflict no one cared about, in which none of the communist characters speak. After a disastrous test screening, the title was reduced from *Oh, Inchon!* to plain old *Inchon*, and the running time was slashed to 105 minutes (chopping out the recently deceased Janssen's final performance). Moon's mission was definitely not accomplished.



CANNON FILMS

Filmmaker Mark Hartley shines a light on Hollywood's weirdest ever movie studio. It could only happen in the '80s...

What do Charles Bronson, *Masters Of The Universe*, Chuck Norris and Tobe Hooper's *Lifeforce* have in common? They were all part of Cannon Films, a movie studio that flourished in the '80s while under the guard of producers Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, cranking out over 90 films in its 10-year run before crashing and burning in the wake of some epic box office flops (see *Superman IV: The Quest For Peace*).

"It's a cinematic fever dream that amazingly actually existed," Aussie director Mark Hartley says of the studio, and he should know. His documentary *Electric Boogaloo* takes a riffle through the Cannon back catalogue,

revealing the gob-smacking and hilarious stories behind the making of the movies.

Bought by Israeli cousins Golan and Globus in 1979 for \$500,000, Cannon Films became an emblem for bad taste and rushed production schedules, snaring stars like Chuck Norris with multi-picture deals and funding most of its output on 'pre-sales' – creating posters for films that often hadn't been written yet.

With *Electric Boogaloo*, Hartley trotted the globe, seeking out former Cannon employees. He tracked down over 100 of them, 85 of whom appear in the documentary, including stars like Alex Winter, Dolph Lundgren, Elliott Gould and Bo Derek. All of them gloriously tear apart their old

Cannon pictures while telling wild tales about their bosses.

"When I was doing the research and interviewing people, I did think it was going to end up being an inspirational David

versus Goliath story about these rough and tumble Israelis coming over to America, trying to take on the studio system and getting so close to being a major studio," Hartley says. "That wasn't the story I ended up getting from people."

Frequently revealed as scrupulous businessmen who shot from the hip, Golan and Globus's relationship with the movie industry (and each other) forms the crux of Hartley's film. The duo refused to take part in the doc and Golan passed away the day before *Electric Boogaloo* made its world premiere.

"I don't think any film company made films with such diverse subject matter," Hartley marvels. "They made sex comedies, action films, arthouse films, ninja films... They ticked every single genre box. And Cannon weren't as nickel-and-dime as the Corman films, they knew how to make movies – they were just made through this crazy Israeli/European prism that makes them slightly surreal now. That's their strength and their novelty and why people do love Cannon films." >>





REVOLUTION

"Watching *Revolution* is like visiting a museum: it looks good without really being alive." *VARIETY*

Year 1985 **Cost** \$36 million **US Gross** \$358,574

It was a bad sign when Hugh Hudson said he wanted his film about the American Revolution to be "impressionistic" with a gloomy ending. Not to mention when Goldcrest Films, then hailed as saviours of the British film industry, agreed with Warner

Bros to pay for any budgetary overruns. On set, Hudson was a perfectionist, behaving like he was making a masterpiece. Then there was the strange casting, and even stranger accents: Al Pacino speaking in a Scottish-Cockney-Bronx hybrid; Donald Sutherland as the pantomime British villain, with a dire Yorkshire brogue; and Nastassja Kinski as the Anglo-Irish love interest.

As Hudson spent even more, Pacino fell ill, the weather turned nasty and a £250,000

crane fell over a cliff. The final edit was a mess after entire scenes were dumped to cut costs.

Revolution was greeted in the US by a hate campaign, with scorn heaped on the Brits for cocking up US history ("England's answer to *Heaven's Gate*," said one; another said Hudson had "the compositional eye of an earthworm"). Goldcrest went belly up, Hudson spent a year recuperating and Pacino didn't make another movie for five years.



HEAVEN'S GATE

"So confusing, so overlong, so ponderous that it fails to work on almost any level." *VARIETY*

Year 1980 **Cost** \$44 million **US Gross** \$3.5 million

United Artists really wanted to win Oscars with "a Michael Cimino film". He'd made *The Deer Hunter* and *Thunderbolt And Lightfoot*. What could go wrong? The first sign of impending doom was Cimino's insistence that the film be billed as "Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*" on all ads and on all cinema hoardings, with his name in letters the same size as the title. Hmmm. And they should certainly have started worrying when he demanded the contractual right to over-spend. Uh-oh.

Cimino was making a Western about the Johnson County Wars of 1890, so it seemed only right and proper to create an entire town in Montana and raise it on wooden stilts so as

not to damage the National Park land he was building on. He also took his time, tearing down and rebuilding sets, flooding them with extras, and filming 30 takes of every shot. He shot two hours of film a day, costing \$1m a week. For every day he shot, Cimino fell a day behind schedule. UA wrote off the first \$15 million and pumped in another \$15 million in the vain hope that it was investing in genius. By the time location work wrapped, Cimino had shot over 220 hours of film.

Opening in November 1980, the final cut ran at three hours and 34 minutes. No one showed up at the post-premiere party and the panicky studio withdrew the film to re-cut it. The new version didn't fare any better. *Heaven's Gate* became a symbol of the discredited director-centric '70s system, while Cimino reduced UA to a shadow of its former self. It finally sold to MGM for \$200m. They could have made four *Heaven's Gates* for that.

THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

"The financiers must want to kill this guy. The scenes have the deadness of special effects without clear narrative." *THE NEW YORKER*

Year 1988 **Cost** \$46.3 million **US Gross** \$8 million

The *Adventures Of Baron Munchausen* was meant to be a chance for Terry Gilliam to relax after the studio battles he'd endured over *Brazil*. A series of fantastic escapades from a German storybook, it should have been the perfect film for Gilliam to indulge his imagination. But, as soon as he enlisted the help of German producer Thomas Schuhly, things started to go wrong.

Schuhly suggested production move to Rome's Cinecittà studios to save money but,

thanks to dodgy locals fleecing the production, the initial £23m budget rapidly vanished and Gilliam was forced to cut whole scenes or be sacked. Schuhly ignored Columbia's budget directives and production was closed after seven weeks while Film Finances prepared to sue Gilliam for fraud.

Money Schuhly promised never materialised. It was then hit by a massive lawsuit from producer Allan Buckhantz, who claimed to own the remake rights to the 1943 film version. By the time the film was finished, Columbia's head, David Puttnam, had left the studio and it was written off as an accounting exercise. It did, however, receive three Academy Award nominations.



ISHTAR


"It never gets beyond a lame concept. Was the camel the only blind creature who had something to do with this picture?" *VARIETY*

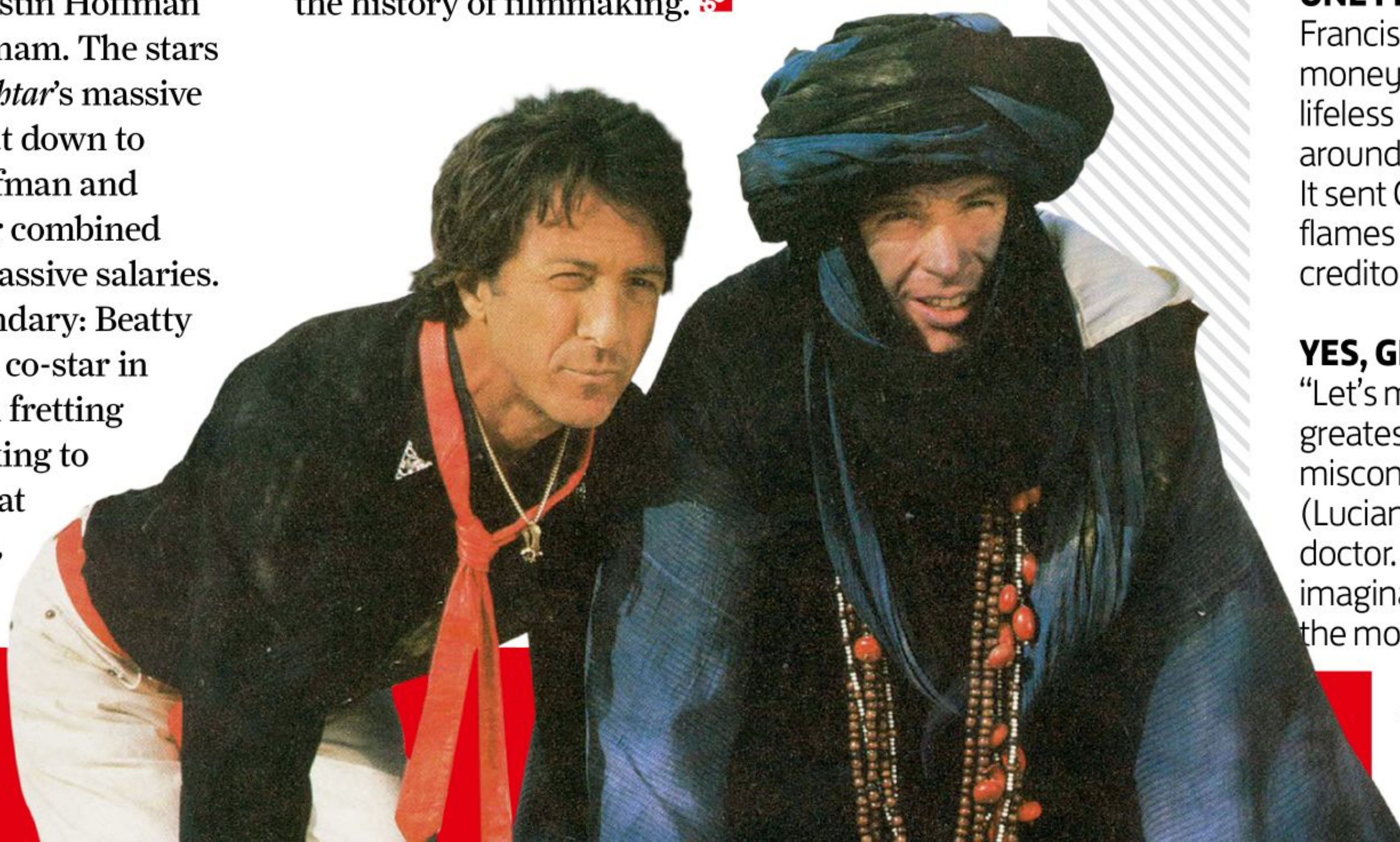
Year 1987 **Cost** \$50 million **US Gross** \$14 million

Even today, Hollywood insiders wonder whether the shockingly unfunny *Ishtar* wasn't just a practical joke perpetrated by Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman on Columbia boss, David Puttnam. The stars loathed the studio chief, but *Ishtar*'s massive overspending could also be put down to simple star vanity. Beatty, Hoffman and director Elaine May used their combined clout to secure final cut and massive salaries.

Production stories are legendary: Beatty wanting to get rid of his camel co-star in case it upstaged him; Hoffman fretting about terrorist attacks and asking to move the production to Spain at his own expense... Meanwhile, May shot tonnes of footage in

the desert, prompting one source to quip: "She's a woman of many words. The word 'cut' does not happen to be among them."

Given that the shoot went six months past the original release date, and that May devoted much of that time to locating a desert with sand dunes, you do have to wonder whether *Ishtar* was a practical joke. If so, then it has to be the most elaborate one in the history of filmmaking. 



CRASH AND BURN

Less prime '80s turkey, more slimy, disposable giblets...

HONKY TONK FREEWAY (1981)

John Schlesinger's unfunny look at American madness ended Lew Grade and Lord Delfont's attempts to "invest in American film". After pouring EMI's cash into *Raise The Titanic!* and a Village People musical, they put \$11 million into this film about a US town trying to win tourists. Schlesinger built the town, painted it pink, blew it up and added Bubbles the elephant. It played to empty seats worldwide.

ROAR! (1981)

Tippi Hedren was clearly disturbed by working with Hitchcock on *The Birds*. Why else would she and husband Noel mortgage everything they owned to make a \$17 million version of *Big Cat Diaries*? A plea to save lions, tigers and cheetahs tacked on to a zero-plot drama, it took 11 years to make, thanks to regular maimings and a virus that killed most of the feline cast. It lasted a whole week in cinemas.

ONE FROM THE HEART (1982)

Francis Ford Coppola sank \$14m of his own money – plus \$12m of other people's – into this lifeless epic about blue-collar lovers who shag around before realising they just love each other. It sent Coppola's new Zoetrope studio down in flames and Coppola himself just stopped the creditors from taking away his furniture.

YES, GIORGIO! (1982)

"Let's make a rom-com with the world's fattest, er, greatest tenor!" "Cool! Here's \$19 million." In this misconceived lark, a happily warded opera star (Luciano Pavarotti) shags an American throat doctor. The sex scenes were fortunately left to the imagination. Audiences opted to leave the rest of the movie there, too.

MAGIC MOMENTS

The sights, the sounds, the scenes and the lines that caught our fancy in the '80s...

WORDS CERI THOMAS

1 **HEEERE'S JOHNNY**
THE SHINING 1980



2 SPIELBERG TAKES OFF

E.T. – THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL 1982

E.T. and Elliot (Henry Thomas) fly a bicycle in front of the moon. And a logo is born.

3 STUFF THE TEDDYBEARS

STAR WARS: EPISODE VI – RETURN OF THE JEDI 1983

Ewoks be damned – it's the Speeder Bikes sequence, zipping between the trees, that has the Force with it.

4 MAKING RIPPLES

FATAL ATTRACTION 1987

Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) drowns psycho Alex (Glenn Close) in the tub – but is she really dead?

5 “WHERE DOES HE GET THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS?”

BATMAN 1989

The Joker (Jack Nicholson) goes green-haired with envy.

6 “1.21 JIGAWATTS? 1.22 JIGAWATTS? GREAT SCOTT!”

BACK TO THE FUTURE 1985

The Doc (Christopher Lloyd) almost loses his marbles over time travel.

7 DUDE LOOKS LIKE A LADY

TOOTSIE 1982

Unemployed actor Michael Dorsey (Dustin Hoffman) takes his first walk down the street as Dorothy Michaels.

8 “LET BATTLE LA COMMENCE”

RAN 1985

Stunning colour-coded armies prepare to unleash hell against a magnificently bleak background in this classic.

9 “DISTURBING THE PEACE? I GOT THROWN OUT OF A WINDOW! WHAT’S THE FUCKIN’ CHARGE FOR GETTING PUSHED OUT OF A MOVING CAR, HUH? JAYWALKING?”

BEVERLY HILLS COP 1984

Axel Foley (Eddie Murphy) rants.

10 “THAT’S NOT A KNIFE. THIS IS A KNIFE”

CROCODILE DUNDEE 1986

Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan) cuts a New York City mugger down to size.

11 “I’M AN EXCELLENT DRIVER...”

RAIN MAN 1988

Raymond Babbitt (Dustin Hoffman) starts to drive his brother Charlie (Tom Cruise) round the bend.



13 WHO YA GONNA CALL?

GHOSTBUSTERS 1984

Four flabby comics in jumpsuits face down a giant marshmallow man dressed like a sailor. Eat your heart out, Godzilla.

14 “I FEEL THE NEED... THE NEED FOR SPEED!”

TOP GUN 1986

Maverick (Tom Cruise) and Goose (Anthony Edwards) prepare to head into the danger zone.

15 AMBIDEXTROUS

THE PRINCESS BRIDE 1987

Losing against the Man In Black, Inigo (Mandy Patinkin) swaps his sword from his not-so-good left hand to his brilliant right. But why is the Man In Black still smiling? “I’m not left-handed either...”

16 DON’T BOTHER ME AT WORK

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN 1982

You’d like to claim the fight between Zack (Richard Gere) and Sgt Foley (Louis Gossett Jr) was the best bit, but you know it’s the moment Gere sweeps Debra Winger off her feet.

17 FLASHDANCE... WHAT A FEELING!

FLASHDANCE 1983

The audition scene. Just wow.



12 “IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE. I WAS NINE YEARS OLD. ME AND MOM WERE DECORATING THE TREE, WAITING FOR DAD TO COME HOME FROM WORK. A COUPLE HOURS WENT BY. DAD WASN’T HOME. SO MOM CALLED THE OFFICE. NO ANSWER. CHRISTMAS DAY CAME AND WENT, AND STILL NOTHING. SO THE POLICE BEGAN A SEARCH. FOUR OR FIVE DAYS WENT BY. NEITHER ONE OF US COULD EAT OR SLEEP. EVERYTHING WAS FALLING APART. IT WAS SNOWING OUTSIDE...”

GREMLINS 1984

Kate (Phoebe Cates) wins hands down when it comes to bad Crimbo stories.



18 JUNGLE FEVER

PLATOON 1986

19 SEIZE THE DAY

DEAD POETS SOCIETY 1989

You've got to have a heart of steel not to feel a flicker of sentiment when the big "Captain, My Captain!" moment sees the posh school lads climbing up on their desks in defiance of authority.

20 EAST VS WEST

ROCKY IV 1985

Hot for revenge after the death of Apollo Creed, Rocky (Sylvester Stallone) finally climbs into the ring with Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren). "I must break you," hisses the Red machine. Bring it on!

21 "I WOULDN'T LIVE WITH YOU IF THE WORLD WERE FLOODED WITH PISS AND YOU LIVED IN A TREE!"

PARENTHOOD 1989

Julie (Martha Plimpton) raises the bar for creative insults.

22 IT HAD TO BE YOU...

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY 1989

"Yes, yes, YES!" Maybe men and women can't be friends, but they can certainly fake orgasms in restaurants together.

23 CRANE STANCE

THE KARATE KID 1984

With his knee in tatters, Daniel San's only got one chance to win his final karate match: the crane stance. "If do right, no can defend..." Damn straight.

24 RIPLEY'S LAST STAND

ALIENS 1986

Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) takes on big momma alien with an industrial fork lift. Take that, bee-yatch!

25 HANS FREE

DIE HARD 1988

Blasted away by John McClane (Bruce Willis), German terrorist Hans (Alan Rickman) heads to Splatsville. "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker."



26 TWO MEN ON A GIANT PIANO

BIG 1988

Josh (Tom Hanks) and Macmillan (Robert Loggia) toe-tap 'Chopsticks'.

27 NICE GUY EDDIE

BUSTS A MOVE!

FOOTLOOSE 1984

New boy in Hicksville Ren (Kevin Bacon) teaches Willard (Chris Penn) a few dance steps.

28 "WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY A GAME?"

WARGAMES 1983

A military supercomputer challenges boy hacker David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) to a bout of war.

29 CRUISE OUT OF CONTROL

RISKY BUSINESS 1983

Joel (Tom Cruise) mimes to Bob Seger in socks, pants and shades.

31 COPS AND RAMBOS

FIRST BLOOD 1982

Arrested because the cops didn't like the look of him, Vietnam vet John Rambo (Sylvester Stallone) escapes into the woods. If they want him now, they're going to have to come and get him.

32 WHITE LINES, DON'T DO IT

SCARFACE 1983

The last stand of one Tony Montana (Al Pacino). "Say hello to my leedle friend!"

33 GOOOAAAALLL!

ESCAPE TO VICTORY 1981

The battered Allied POW team needs something special to draw level with the Nazi squad. Cue Pele's overhead kick.

34 THE BIGGEST GUN IN THE WORLD

PREDATOR 1987

Think you've seen some movie hardware before? Say hello to Blain (Jesse Ventura) and his not-so-little friend, Painless, a rotating electric Galling gun.



35 "YOU USED A CUTTING TOOL ON THE BRANCH SO THAT YOU COULD SEE. AND YOU PASSED THE TIME WHITTILING AND DREAMING. WHEN NIGHT CAME YOU SAW THEM PASS BY THEIR BRIGHT WINDOWS. YOU WATCHED THE SHADES GO DOWN..."

MANHUNTER 1986

FBI agent Will Graham (William Petersen) has his eureka moment.

36 PILLOW TALK

PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES 1987

Forced to share a bed together, businessman Neal Page (Steve Martin) and travelling salesman Del Griffith (John Candy) wake up snuggled together. "Where's your other hand?" "Between two pillows..." "Those aren't pillows!" Aaaaargh!

30 PUNCH DRUNK

RAGING BULL 1980

Jake La Motta (Robert De Niro) takes everything that Sugar Ray Robinson can throw at him, losing the fight but taunting his opponent through a face that looks like mincemeat: "You didn't get me down, Ray..."





37 "NO. I AM YOUR FATHER"

STAR WARS: EPISODE V – THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK 1980

Darth Vader becomes the poster boy for absentee dads.

38 "THEY PULL A KNIFE, YOU PULL A GUN. HE SENDS ONE OF YOURS TO THE HOSPITAL, YOU SEND ONE OF HIS TO THE MORGUE. THAT'S THE CHICAGO WAY, AND THAT'S HOW YOU GET CAPONE! ARE YOU READY TO DO THAT?"

THE UNTOUCHABLES 1987

Malone (Sean Connery) explains things for Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner).

39 SEND IN THE THE CALVARY OF CHRIST 1988

Dying on the cross, Jesus Christ (Willem Defoe) either has a vivid hallucination of what his life would be like should he survive – including love with Mary Magdalene (Barbara Hershey) – or actually lives it before a miracle allows him to turn back time. Stunning.

41 THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO CRASH DAVIS

BULL DURHAM 1988

"I believe in the soul, the cock, the pussy, the small of a woman's back, the hanging curve ball, high fibre, good scotch, that the novels of Susan Sontag are self-indulgent, overrated crap. I believe Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. I believe there ought to be a constitutional amendment outlawing AstroTurf and the designated hitter. I believe in the sweet spot, soft-core pornography, opening your presents Christmas morning rather than Christmas Eve..."

42 "I HAVE A HEAD FOR BUSINESS AND A BOD FOR SIN. IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT?"

WORKING GIRL 1988

Not from where we're sitting, Miss McGill (Melanie Griffith).



43 WHO NOSE?

ROXANNE 1987

Steve Martin wins a bet by rattling off 20 insults aimed at his own giant hooter.

44 THE BIG BREAK THE COLOR OF MONEY 1986

Fast Eddie Felson (Paul Newman) snarls, "Hey, I'm back!" at his former pool protege (Tom Cruise).

45 TWIST AND SHOUT FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF 1986

Ferris (Matthew Broderick) commandeers an entire parade for a little rock'n'roll.

46 ON A MISSION FROM GOD THE BLUES BROTHERS 1980

Forced to play a gig in a bar that likes both kinds of music ("Country and Western"), Jake and Elwood come up with a whipcracking spin on 'Rawhide'.

47 "GREED IS GOOD" WALL STREET 1987

Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) lays out his credo to the stockholders of a company he wants to buy and strip.



40 MACHINE JUSTICE ROBOCOP 1987





48 LADY IN RED

THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS 1989

Susie Diamond (Michelle Pfeiffer). A grand piano. That red dress. Making Whoopee...



49 "LISTEN. AND UNDERSTAND. THAT TERMINATOR IS OUT THERE. IT CAN'T BE BARGAINED WITH. IT CAN'T BE REASONED WITH. IT DOESN'T FEEL PITY, OR REMORSE, OR FEAR. AND IT ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT STOP, EVER, UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD."

THE TERMINATOR 1984

Reese (Michael Biehn) doesn't sugarcoat their survival chances.

50 INSECT POLITICS

THE FLY 1986

The "Brundlefly" (Jeff Goldblum) melts someone's hand with his acidic vomit.



51 BITE ME!

THE LOST BOYS 1987

David (Kiefer Sutherland) hisses, "You'll never grow old, Michael, and you'll never die, but you must feed."

52 CGI LIVES!

TRON 1982

Who didn't feel a tingle run down their spine when the lightbikes started zooming about the screen in the daddy of computer-generated effects movies?

53 FIGHT CLUB

LETHAL WEAPON 1987

Riggs (Mel Gibson) squares off with psycho mercenary Mr Joshua (Gary Busey): "How about it, Jack? Would you like a shot at the title?"

54 BURNT PIZZA

DO THE RIGHT THING 1989

Trusted delivery boy Mookie (Spike Lee) hurls a dustbin through the window of Sal's Pizzeria and a business that's lasted 25 years goes up in flames. It's like watching Atlanta burn...

55 NAPPY RASH

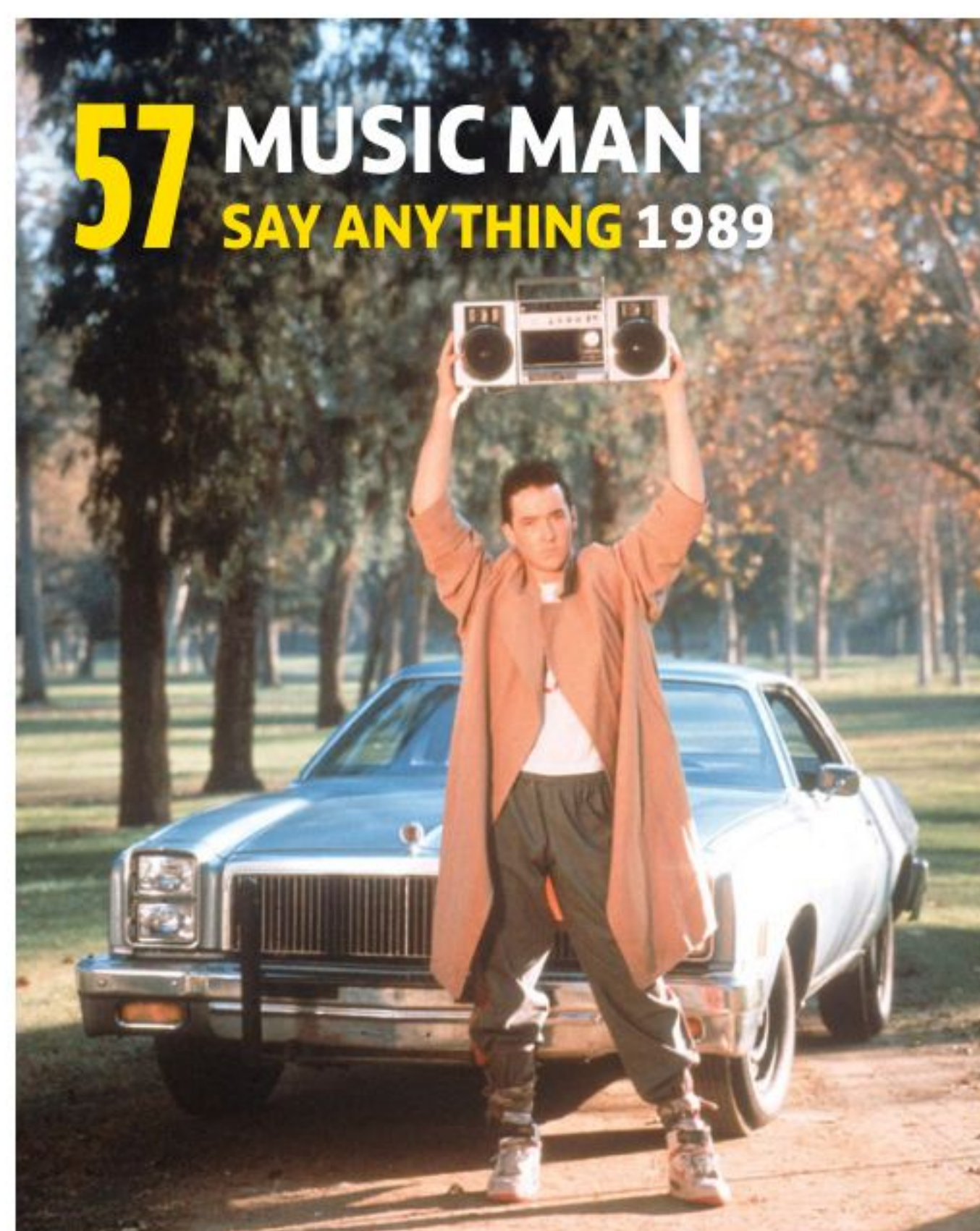
RAISING ARIZONA 1987

It's late, the kidnapped baby needs changing and you're short on cash – what do you do? Well, if you're HI McDunnough (Nicolas Cage) you pull a pair of tights over your head and steal the nappies from the first convenience store you can find. "Better hurry it up, I'm in dutch with the wife."

56 SNAKE EYE

ESCAPE FROM NEWYORK 1981

The President's trapped in a city turned into a prison. Who the hell could they send in to get him? Time to march in – at gunpoint – one-eyed former special forces soldier-turned-bank robber Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell). And a whispery voiced lethal legend is born...



57 MUSIC MAN

SAY ANYTHING 1989

58 DEPP DEATH

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 1984

You've got to love Freddy's claws, but killing Glen (Johnny Depp) by having him munched up by his own bed is the image that'll keep you awake at night.

59 CAR TROUBLE

CHRISTINE 1983

Christine, the '58 Plymouth Fury from Hell, is destroyed by the high school heavy mob. But one by one the dents and damage just repair themselves.

60 "BEING HAPPY ISN'T ALL THAT GREAT. I MEAN, THE LAST TIME I WAS REALLY HAPPY, I GOT REALLY FAT."

SEX, LIES, AND VIDEOTAPE 1989

Ann (Andie Macdowell) outlines the "stay miserable diet".

61 SPACE MAN

THE RIGHT STUFF 1983

His plane's a smear on the desert, a rising column of smoke visible for miles, but Chuck Yeager (Sam Shepard) stalks away from the wreckage, battered and burned, but still the greatest test pilot in the world. Any landing you can walk away from...

62 "I'VE SEEN THINGS YOU PEOPLE WOULDN'T BELIEVE. ATTACK SHIPS ON FIRE OFF THE SHOULDER OF ORION. I WATCHED C-BEAMS GLITTER IN THE DARK NEAR THE TANNHAUSER GATE. ALL THOSE MOMENTS WILL BE LOST IN TIME, LIKE TEARS IN RAIN. TIME TO DIE."

BLADE RUNNER 1982

Replicant Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) goes out with dignity.

63 JUST DESERTS

PARIS, TEXAS 1984

Dumb, dazed and with no memory of his past, Travis (Harry Dean Stanton) walks out of the Texan desert. What a way to start a movie...

64 STRIP CLEESE

A FISH CALLED WANDA 1988

Straightlaced Archie Leach (John Cleese) is stripping away cooing in a foreign language to sexpot Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis). He's prancing about with his Y-fronts on his noggin when in walks the family who own the house he's using.

65 "RIGHT, HERE'S THE PLAN. FIRST, WE GO IN THERE AND GET WRECKED, THEN WE EAT A PORK PIE, THEN WE DROP SOME SURMONTIL-50S EACH. THAT WAY WE'LL MISS OUT ON MONDAY AND COME UP SMILING TUESDAY MORNING."

WITHNAIL & I 1987

No two ways about it – Withnail (Richard E Grant) shows that he knows how to party.

66 **DINNER IS SERVED**
THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER 1989

"I'll cook him! And I'll eat him!" screams Albert (Michael Gambon) when he realises that his wife (Helen Mirren) is shagging someone else. He settles for having him killed, but his words come back to haunt him when said wife has said lover baked up and forces Albert to tuck into his cooked flesh.

67 **BOUNCING ALONG**
ROAD HOUSE 1989

"Nobody ever wins a fight," claims zen doorman Dalton (Patrick Swayze). Bet that guy whose throat you ripped out would like to disagree...

68 **PULLING POWER**
THE HITCHER 1985

Jim (C Thomas Howell) sits down to enjoy a plate of French fries. Except... wait a minute... that's not a chip! It's a severed finger!

69 **IT'S A GAS**
BLUE VELVET 1986



71 "I AM CONNOR MACLEOD OF THE CLAN MACLEOD. I WAS BORN IN 1518 IN THE VILLAGE OF GLENFINNAN ON THE SHORES OF LOCH SHIEL. AND I AM IMMORTAL."

HIGHLANDER 1986

Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert) can never settle for a simple "Hello".

72 **GOPHER GLORY**
CADDYSHACK 1980

Nutjob greenskeeper Carl Spackler (Bill Murray) tries to blow his gopher nemesis to kingdom come.

73 **JOGGING ALONG**
CHARIOTS OF FIRE 1981

Vangelis' music and that run along the beach. The British are coming in slo-mo...

74 **THE BOXER**
THE VANISHING 1988

Given the chance to finally discover what happened to his missing girlfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets) agrees to let his abductor do to him what he did to her. He wakes up in a dark cramped space and flicks on his lighter. Like her, he's been buried alive in a coffin.

75 "NOBODY PUTS
BABY IN A CORNER!"
DIRTY DANCING 1987

Swayze defends his woman's right to dance. Millions swoon.

76 "YOU'RE MORE IN NEED
OF A BLOWJOB THAN
ANY OTHER WHITE MAN IN
THE HISTORY OF THE
HUMAN RACE."

GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM 1987

Adrian Cronauer (Robin Williams) scuppers any chance of promotion.

77 "O POINTY BIRDS, O
POINTY POINTY, ANOINT
MY HEAD, ANOINTY-
NOINTY..."

**THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS
1983**

Dr Michael Hfuhruhurr is a poet.

78 **SEMPER FI!**
FULL METAL JACKET 1987

After gunning down vicious sergeant Hartman (R Lee Ermey), abused trainee Pyle (Vincent D'Onofrio) puts his gun barrel in his gob.

79 **WYLD STALLIONS RULE!**
**BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT
ADVENTURE 1989**

Time travellers William S Preston esquire (Alex Winter) and Theodore Logan (Keanu Reeves) are chuffed to find out the medieval dudes want to put them in the Iron Maiden. Then they realise he means the torture implement, not the rock band...

80 **MIXOLOGY**
COCKTAIL 1988

He may be a couch-jumper now, but back then he was the funkiest barman in town. Make ours a daiquiri, Tommy!

70 **BULLET TIME**
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 1981



HARRISON FORD

He was the biggest box-office draw of the decade, but the '80s also saw Harrison Ford prove there was more to him than Han Solo and Indiana Jones...

If the '80s belonged to just one actor, it was Harrison Ford. The decade began with Ford playing iconic roles in two of the biggest film franchises ever; it ended with him having five of its highest-grossing movies and a billion dollars' worth of ticket sales to his credit. More importantly, the '80s also marked Ford's emergence as a respected, multi-faceted Oscar-nommed actor who made interesting career choices and could carry intelligent movies just as well as a blaster or bullwhip.

Not that Ford's success in the '80s looked certain. On the contrary, things seemed bleak for the carpenter-turned-actor at the start of the decade: in the three years after *Star Wars* had propelled him to stardom, Ford failed to capitalise on the success of his turn as Han Solo. With *Hanover Street*, *Force 10 From Navarone*, *The Frisco Kid* and the *Star Wars Holiday Special*, in which an embarrassed-looking Ford was forced to trade dialogue with Chewbacca's family, including the Wookiee's son, Lumpy...

Ford's first movie of the '80s was *The Empire Strikes Back*. His decision to sign up was motivated by the assurance of a stronger role – a promise writer/producer George Lucas and director Irvin Kershner made good on. The latter's desire to produce a more performance-driven film allowed Ford to take his portrayal of *Star Wars*' charming rogue into hyperspace.

While the success of *The Empire Strikes Back* thrust Ford back into the spotlight, it was his second film of the '80s that would offer the first proof that there was life after Han Solo. Steven Spielberg's *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* saw Ford saving the world from the Nazis and toplineing a franchise to rival *Star Wars*' appeal. Ford may have only been offered the film after *Magnum PI*'s Tom Selleck had been unable to take the role, but once cast as bullwhip-wielding archaeologist and part-time treasure hunter Dr Henry

'Indiana' Jones Jr, Ford proved his worth as both an action hero and romantic lead.


Indiana Jones provided Ford with an ideal vehicle for his dry wit and Everyman appeal, and his mesmerising performance helped ensure that *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* was the highest-grossing – and best – film of 1981. *Raiders* also showed he could carry and open a film entirely by himself.

After the double-whammy of *Empire* and *Raiders*, Ford made one of the most interesting choices of his career by signing up to *Blade Runner*. On the surface, Ridley Scott's sci-fi noir thriller sounded like a return to *Star Wars* territory, but the two were universes apart. Set in a dark future, the film introduced Ford as Deckard, a former Blade Runner – the unit that

obligations with his next two films, *Return Of The Jedi* and *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*. The former promised to be the explosive completion of the *Star Wars* trilogy, but actually proved to be a damp squib. While the film stacked up ticket receipts and merchandise sales, Ford, predictably, begged George Lucas for a death scene for Han. "Han had no momma, no poppa and no story," Ford explained. "I thought it would be good to kill him off, but George didn't agree." A good thing, too, given his reprisal of the roguish hero in 2015's *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens*.

The release of *Jedi* was followed a year later by the debut of *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* and, after notching up two back-to-back box-office smashes, Ford would leave blockbusting behind for the next four years to work on adult-orientated projects and play roles that would confirm his status as a critically acclaimed actor.

His artistic break came with *Witness*, the 1985 drama that earned his first Academy Award nomination and had highbrow critics raving over him. In yet another change of pace, Ford turned up in *Working Girl*. Mike Nichols' celebration of greed, ambition and shoulder pads saw the decade's biggest star displaying a gift for screwball comedy, and Ford ended the decade with a triumphant return to blockbusterdom and one of his most popular roles in *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade*.

By the close of the '80s, Ford had carved himself a unique niche in Hollywood. No longer dependent on George Lucas or 'walking carpets' for success, Ford dodged his *Star Wars* typecasting to become an actor with box-office clout and talent to match. Here was someone who could tackle the likes of Schwarzenegger and Stallone in the battle for ticket sales, but could also give De Niro and Pacino a run for their money in the quality stakes. 

The '80s marked Ford's emergence as a respected, Oscar-nominated actor who made interesting film choices

hunts down renegade androids known as replicants – coerced out of retirement.

Sadly, despite the brilliance of its premise, *Blade Runner* was marred by problems throughout its production. Scott's eye-popping but sombre film was recut by studio chiefs, who ordered the addition of a 'happy ending' and a Deckard narration track. Although the film would go on to develop a loyal following, Ford himself made no secret of his disappointment in the movie or its modest showing at the box office. "The frustrating thing is that it could have been more than a cult picture," he later explained. "I was desperately unhappy with the narration." Despite this, Ford took on the role of Deckard once again in 2017's *Blade Runner 2049*.

Following *Blade Runner* and a brief cameo role in *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* that ended up on the cutting-room floor, Ford fulfilled contractual

Quote me

Ford expression...

ON WITNESS

"Eighty-five percent of the scripts I read, I know where they came from – it's a second-generation effect. This was more or less a literate script for adults."

ON INDIANA JONES

"He's a swashbuckling type but he has human frailties, fears and money problems. He does brave things but I wouldn't call him a hero. He's just in there with a bullwhip to keep the world at bay."

ON HIS BLADE

RUNNER BUZZ-CUT

"The haircut was my idea. Ridley Scott had envisioned a big felt hat, at a time prior to seeing *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. It was important to me not to wear the same hat in one movie after another."

ON "BEING GRUMPY"

"I don't think I'm grumpy. I have opinions. I have an independent vision. I am a purposeful person. On a day-to-day basis, I'm other than grumpy. I think it's a case where I am coming to do business and not there just to be flattered and cajoled and used."

ON HIS

PRIVATE LIFE

"I do the same things that any ordinary person does. After I make a film, I go back to my ranch and face reality. That keeps me physically and emotionally healthy."



Golden OLDIES

The '80s Oscar
grabbers in depth
and detail...

WORDS DAVID CLACK

1980 THE 52ND ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Johnny Carson Location Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Date 14 April 1980



The '80s began as the '70s had finished for Meryl Streep, with the actress featuring in her second successive Best Picture (following *The Deer Hunter*). This time, however, she converts her Best Supporting Actress nomination into a trophy of her own. Meanwhile, Dustin Hoffman is as surprised as everyone else when he sees off the likes of Al Pacino and Peter Sellers to claim Best Actor.

BEST GAG

"He has no genitalia and he's holding a sword." Dustin Hoffman attempts to psychoanalyse his trophy.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Kramer Vs Kramer looks comfortable with nine nominations.

MOST AWARDS

Director Robert Benton goes home

grinning, clutching Best Picture and Best Director among *Kramer's* party of five.

BEST SPEECH

"Most actors don't work, and when you're a broke actor, you can't write, you can't paint, you have to practise accents while you drive a taxi cab." Hoffman again, acknowledging the industry's unsung heroes as he picks up Best Actor.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

"Hey, there's an Oscar in here!" A guest discovers Meryl Streep's Oscar abandoned in the ladies' room.

WHO WON WHAT

Best Film *Kramer Vs Kramer*
Best Director Robert Benton, *Kramer Vs Kramer*
Best Actor Dustin Hoffman, *Kramer Vs Kramer*
Best Actress Sally Field, *Norma Rae*
Best Supporting Actor Melvyn Douglas, *Being There*
Best Supporting Actress Meryl Streep, *Kramer Vs Kramer*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Robert Benton, *Kramer Vs Kramer*
Best Screenplay (original) Steve Tesich, *Breaking Away*



1981 THE 53RD ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Johnny Carson Location Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Date 31 March 1981

The 53rd ceremony is postponed a day after the assassination attempt on US President Ronald Reagan. For Robert De Niro, it's worth the wait: he wins Best Actor at the third time of asking, while Robert Redford becomes the first actor to win Best Director on his debut.

BEST GAG

"He's not the world's most thrilling speaker. I suggest while you're listening to him not to drive or operate heavy machinery." Host Johnny Carson takes his annual dig at MPAA chief Jack Valenti.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Despite a jumbo tally of eight nominations, David Lynch's *Elephant Man* fails to bag a single award.

MOST AWARDS

Ordinary People enjoys a healthier ratio, scoring in four of the five categories in which it is nominated.



BEST SPEECH

"Well, I'm gonna have to figure out something new to dream about, that's for sure!" Mary Steenburgen's career peaks as she accepts her Best Supporting Actress award for *Melvin And Howard*.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

It's handbags at dawn when Irene Cara's 'Fame' beats Dolly Parton's '9 To 5' to Best Song. Parton blocks Cara's path to the stage, extending her arms and saying, "I'm not going to let you pass!" Word that it later inspires Ian McKellen for Gandalf's Balrog stand-off remain unconfirmed.

WHO WON WHAT

Best Film *Ordinary People*
Best Director Robert Redford, *Ordinary People*
Best Actor Robert De Niro, *Raging Bull*
Best Actress Sissy Spacek, *Coal Miner's Daughter*
Best Supporting Actor Timothy Hutton, *Ordinary People*
Best Supporting Actress Mary Steenburgen, *Melvin And Howard*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Alvin Sargent, *Ordinary People*
Best Screenplay (original) Bo Goldman, *Melvin And Howard*



1982 THE 54TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Johnny Carson Location Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Date 29 March 1982

While any hopes of a successful decade for British cinema in the Best Picture category start and end with *Chariots Of Fire*, its win marks the beginning of a different winning trend. The true tale of two Olympic athletes in search of glory at the 1924 Olympics, *Chariots* is the first of four biopics to bag the top honours during the '80s.

BEST GAG

With reference to soggy weather on the night, host Johnny Carson is "sad to think that \$40,000 worth of hairdos are floating down the street". Cher wasn't invited until six years later, or Carson's figure may have been right on the money.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Reds bags the most nominations of the decade with 12.



MOST AWARDS

Raiders Of The Lost Ark storms home with five, although no major awards.

BEST SPEECH

"I'd like to thank everyone I ever met in my entire life." Best Supporting Actress winner Maureen Stapleton keeps it short, sweet and chucklesome.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

"I'm so proud and if you would all see me later, I would love to suck face with you all." Ernest Thompson's erotic acceptance speech is met with general recoiling.

WHO WON WHAT

Best Film *Chariots Of Fire*
Best Director Warren Beatty, *Reds*
Best Actor Henry Fonda, *On Golden Pond*
Best Actress Katharine Hepburn, *On Golden Pond*
Best Supporting Actor John Gielgud, *Arthur*
Best Supporting Actress Maureen Stapleton, *Reds*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Ernest Thompson, *On Golden Pond*
Best Screenplay (original) Colin Welland, *Chariots Of Fire*



1983 THE 55TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Hosts Liza Minnelli, Dudley Moore, Richard Pryor, Walter Matthau Date 11 April 1983



In the year *Blade Runner* fails to capitalise on its two nominations and *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* claims only technical awards, Richard Attenborough's cloth-clad hero prevails as *Gandhi* denies Steven Spielberg and Ridley Scott.

BEST GAG

"I wrote a long movie and I'm going to make a long speech." Sadly, as the sound of laughter is replaced by that of yawning, it turns out *Gandhi* screenwriter John Briley isn't joking.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Richard Attenborough's epic beats the competition with 11 nominations.

MOST AWARDS

No problem for the man in the sandals – *Gandhi* walks off with eight.

BEST SPEECH

Mum and Dad don't get a look in when a technician collects the sound effects award for *ET*. Instead he thanks friends for "their sick breathing" as well as "various horses and otters". Ten out of 10 for originality.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

Kristy McNichol displays the speech-skills of a village drunk upon attempting to pronounce the name of Best Animated Short nominee Zbigniew Rybczyński. The situation deteriorates when "Zbigniewski Sky" wins, prompting a second round of excruciating pronunciation from the star.

WHO WON WHAT

Best Film *Gandhi*
Best Director Richard Attenborough, *Gandhi*
Best Actor Ben Kingsley, *Gandhi*
Best Actress Meryl Streep, *Sophie's Choice*
Best Supporting Actor Louis Gossett Jr, *An Officer And A Gentleman*
Best Supporting Actress Jessica Lange, *Tootsie*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Costa-Gavras & Donald Stewart, *Missing*
Best Screenplay (original) John Briley, *Gandhi*



1984 THE 56TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Johnny Carson **Location** Dorothy Chandler Pavilion **Date** 9 April 1984

Jack Nicholson wins the award he'd missed out on two years previously, adding Best Supporting Actor to his mantelpiece. Speeches are notoriously long-winded, making the ceremony the longest ever – only surpassed by 2002's show.

BEST GAG

"This show has been as long as my career," quips Best Actress winner Shirley MacLaine.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Terms Of Endearment starts the evening in pole position with 11.

MOST AWARDS

Terms Of Endearment wins where it matters, taking home five of the main prizes.

BEST SPEECH

Sauntering up to the podium, shades still on, and raising his fist in victory, Jack Nicholson exults simply, "All you rock people

down at the Rosy and up in the Rockies, rock on!"

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

Frank Sinatra presents the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian award but forgets his specs, rendering him unable to read the cue cards. Following a disastrous presentation, he storms off, heads straight for his limo and refuses to accompany the recipient Mike Frankovich to the press tent.

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *Terms Of Endearment*
Best Director James L Brooks, *Terms Of Endearment*
Best Actor Robert Duvall, *Tender Mercies*
Best Actress Shirley MacLaine, *Terms Of Endearment*
Best Supporting Actor Jack Nicholson, *Terms Of Endearment*
Best Supporting Actress Linda Hunt, *The Year Of Living Dangerously*
Best Screenplay (adapted) James L Brooks, *Terms Of Endearment*
Best Screenplay (original) Horton Foote, *Tender Mercies*



When it rains: Dustin Hoffman, and Tom Cruise triumph with *Rain Man* in 1989

1985 THE 57TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Jack Lemmon **Location** Dorothy Chandler Pavilion **Date** 25 March 1985



BEST SPEECH

Sally Field's acceptance for Best Actress, ending with: "I wanted more than anything to have your respect. The first time I didn't feel it. But now I can't deny the fact that you like me. Right now, you really like me!" Sickly sweet, yes, but it has tormented poor Sally ever since.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

"I hope I won't let the occasion down too badly," says 77-year-old Laurence Olivier, before ripping open the Best Picture envelope and declaring the winner without bothering to announce the nominations.

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *Amadeus*
Best Director Milos Forman, *Amadeus*
Best Actor F Murray Abraham, *Amadeus*
Best Actress Sally Field, *Places In The Heart*
Best Supporting Actor Haing S Ngor, *The Killing Fields*
Best Supporting Actress Peggy Ashcroft, *A Passage To India*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*
Best Screenplay (original) Robert Benton, *Places In The Heart*



Winners are asked to restrict their thanks to 45 seconds to prevent a repeat of 1984's four-hour gong-a-thon.

BEST GAG

"Brevity is the soul of wit; in that sense, we hope to have a very soulful evening for you." Hosting for the first time since 1972, Jack Lemmon promises a shorter evening than 1984's show.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Amadeus is up for 11 awards.

MOST AWARDS

An impressive eight for *Amadeus*.

1986 THE 58TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Hosts Alan Alda, Jane Fonda, Robin Williams **Location** Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Anjelica Huston becomes the third generation of the Huston family to win an Oscar when her performance in *Prizzi's Honor* gets the judge's vote. However, daddy director John Huston fails to win his second gong: the oldest ever nominee for Best Director loses out to Sydney Pollack.

BEST GAG

"What do you say we open those suckers up right now?" Robin Williams eyes up the briefcase containing the envelopes before relenting. "I gave it my best shot. I'm afraid we have to do the show."

MOST NOMINATIONS

Tensions are high as the evening kicks off, with 11 each for *Out Of Africa* and Spielberg's *The Color Purple*.

MOST AWARDS

What looked like a straight fight turns out to be a whitewash, as

Sydney Pollack's *Out Of Africa* takes home seven gongs and Spielberg leaves bereft.

BEST SPEECH

"This means a lot to me, since it comes from a role in which I was directed by my father. And I know it means a lot to him." Anjelica Huston acknowledges *Prizzi's Honor* as a family affair.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

The opening song-and-dance number features – get this combo – Telly Savalas, Pat 'Mr Miyagi' Morita and Dom DeLuise.

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *Out Of Africa*
Best Director Sydney Pollack, *Out Of Africa*
Best Actor William Hurt, *Kiss Of The Spider Woman*
Best Actress Geraldine Page, *The Trip To Bountiful*
Best Supporting Actor Don Ameche, *Cocoon*
Best Supporting Actress Anjelica Huston, *Prizzi's Honor*
Best Screenplay (adapted) Kurt Luedtke, *Out Of Africa*
Best Screenplay (original) *Witness*





1987 THE 59TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Hosts Chevy Chase, Goldie Hawn, Paul Hogan
Location Dorothy Chandler Pavilion



MOST AWARDS

Platoon is the evening's biggest winner with four statuettes.

BEST SPEECH

"For the first time you really understood what happened over there, and that it should never, ever in our lifetime happen again." Oliver Stone accepts Best Director.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

A confusion of mis-cues and crossed signals causes Bette Davis to blunder her way through her Best Actor presentation.

Five different films share the top prizes this year. *Hannah And Her Sisters* gets three, including one for Michael Caine. A year of diversity also produces the youngest ever Best Actress in Marlee Matlin, who scores the only award for *Children Of A Lesser God* at the age of 21. She is also the first deaf person to win an Academy Award.

BEST GAG

"I realise I'm not exactly the odds-on favourite, but I travelled 38,000 miles for this and if they read out someone else's name, it's not going to be pretty." Unlikely nominee Paul Hogan threatens to get Antipodean on our asses.

MOST NOMINATIONS

It's war vs corsets as *Platoon* and *A Room With A View* square up with eight nominations apiece.

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *Platoon*

Best Director Oliver Stone, *Platoon*

Best Actor Paul Newman, *The Color Of Money*

Best Actress Marlee Matlin, *Children Of A Lesser God*

Best Supporting Actor Michael Caine, *Hannah And Her Sisters*

Best Supporting Actress Dianne Wiest, *Hannah And Her Sisters*

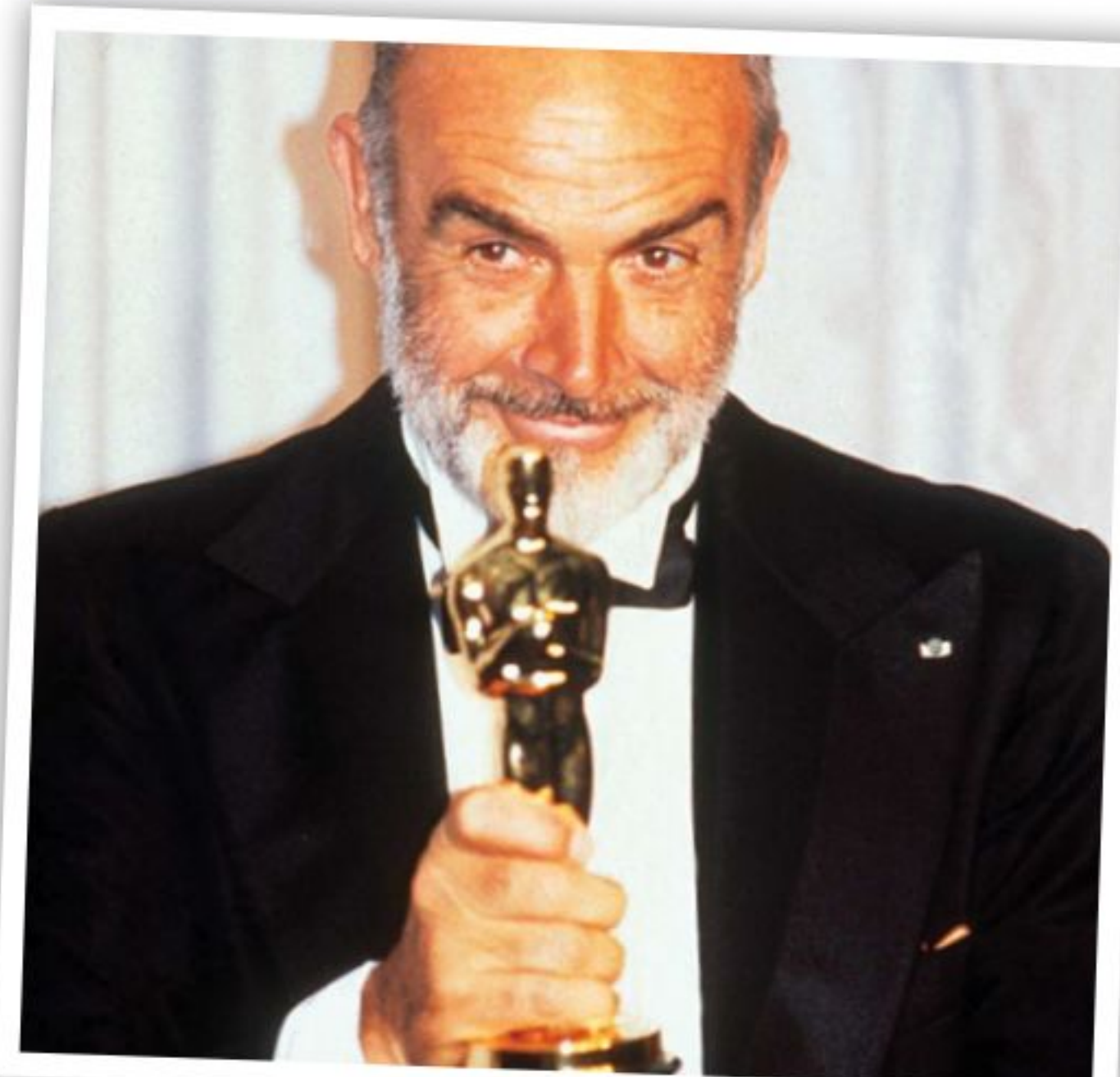
Best Screenplay (adapted) Ruth Praver Jhabvala, *Room With A View*

Best Screenplay (original) Woody Allen, *Hannah And Her Sisters*



1988 THE 60TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Host Chevy Chase **Location** Shrine Civic Auditorium **Date** 11 April 1988



MOST AWARDS

Nine for nine for *Emperor*. A clean sweep.

BEST SPEECH

"The first thing I'm going to do is have a few drinks – naps, I've started somewhat early." A shaken and slightly sloshed Sean Connery proves you can take the Scotsman out of Scotland but...

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

Gridlocked traffic means that many celebrities are forced to abandon their limos and complete the last half-mile of their journey in an indignant jog.

Good evening Hollywood phonies." And so Chevy Chase makes his solo debut as Academy Awards host. He doesn't return the following year. Sean Connery enjoys a warmer reception, getting a standing ovation when he enters to the voiceover introduction: "The name's Connery, Sean Connery."

BEST GAG

"If New York is the Big Apple, to me, Hollywood tonight is the Big Nipple." Best Director winner Bernardo Bertolucci is clearly titillated by Tinseltown.

MOST NOMINATIONS

The Last Emperor is the fancied front-runner, up for nine awards.

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *The Last Emperor*

Best Director Bernardo Bertolucci, *The Last Emperor*

Best Actor Michael Douglas, *Wan Street*

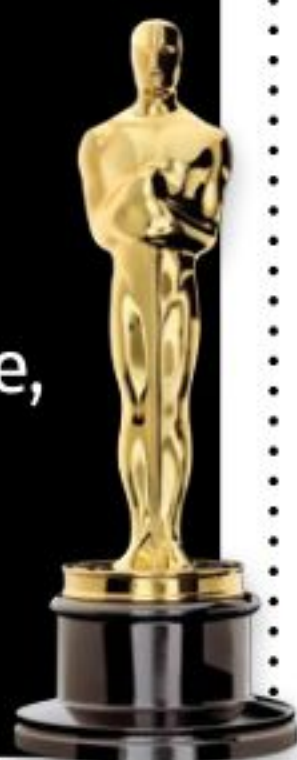
Best Actress Cher, *Moonstruck*

Best Supporting Actor Sean Connery, *The Untouchables*

Best Supporting Actress Olympia Dukakis, *Moonstruck*

Best Screenplay (adapted) Bernardo Bertolucci & Mark Peploe, *The Last Emperor*

Best Screenplay (original) John Patrick Shanley, *Moonstruck*



1989 THE 61ST ACADEMY AWARDS

Host None **Location** Shrine Civic Auditorium **Date** 29 March 1989

For the first time since 1971, possibly due to Chevy Chase's sub-par job in '88, the Academy Awards show take place without a host. Other changes are afoot too: producer Alan Carr replaces the line "And the winner is..." with "And the Oscar goes to..." Cue mass confusion and several balls-ups from presenters.

BEST GAG

Put Robin Williams in a Mickey Mouse get-up and funny stuff is guaranteed to happen. "You never see Robert De Niro's face on a watch," he snickered. Very true, but for a very good reason.

MOST NOMINATIONS

Rain Man leads the way with eight


MOST AWARDS

Rain Man has to settle for a share of the top scorer's glory, equaling *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*'s tally of four.

BEST SPEECH

"This is great, but anyone would fly across the Atlantic to get a kiss from Michelle Pfeiffer." Flattery gets Chris Hampton everywhere, as he picks up Best Adapted Screenplay for *Dangerous Liaisons*.

CRINGE-WORTHY MOMENT

The now legendary car-crash song-and-dance routine that opened the ceremony features Eileen Bowman dressed as Snow White performing a badly choreographed dance routine with Rob Lowe. Sound bad? It looked worse. 

WHOWONWHAT

Best Film *Rain Man*

Best Director Barry Levinson, *Rain Man*

Best Actor Dustin Hoffman, *Rain Man*

Best Actress Jodie Foster, *The Accused*

Best Supporting Actor Kevin Kline, *A Fish Called Wanda*

Best Supporting Actress Geena Davis, *The Accidental Tourist*

Best Screenplay (adapted) Christopher Hampton, *Dangerous Liaisons*

Best Screenplay (original) Ronald Bass & Barry Morrow, *Rain Man*





EROTIC

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

The '80s were a slave to love and, thanks to increasingly relaxed attitudes toward sex, the big screen sizzled like never before. Say hello to the gilded era of the erotic thriller...

WORDS JOSH WINNING

“Does this excite you?” asked Mickey Rourke in *9½ Weeks* (1986) before serving Kim Basinger a meal she'd never forget (yes, the one on the kitchen floor). He might as well have been addressing the cinema-going public of the 1980s, though. If sex was used to shock and smash through cinematic boundaries in the '60s and '70s, it was the '80s when Hollywood discovered that sex sold. And it sold big.

In an era when the public consumption of porn was going through a radical shift, attitudes toward sex were relaxing. The 1970s had dragged porn out of adult bookstores and into cinemas, with screenings of 'porn chic' films taking place in the more open-minded quarters of New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. And as the lines became blurred by filmmakers like Bernardo Bertolucci with *Last Tango In Paris* (1972) and Just Jaeckin with *Emmanuelle* (1974), cinematic sex hopped out of seedy fleapit theatres into the mainstream.

The decade kicked off with something bold, shocking and unconventional. Praised by *The Guardian* as “an ingenious erotic thriller full of

Sexy time: Kathleen Turner and William Hurt get close in *Body Heat*

EROTIC THRILLERS



unexpected shocks", *Dressed To Kill* (1980) fearlessly tackled its dark subject matter as prostitute Liz Blake (Nancy Allen) witnesses a brutal murder. Directed by Brian De Palma, the film's unflinching exploration of gender and sex set the bar high for the decade's rampant raunch, and its impressive box office turnover (\$31m on a budget of just \$6m) helped ignite movie-goers' lust for big-screen love.

And while erotic thriller overlord Paul Verhoeven wouldn't make *Basic Instinct* until 1992 (thereby coronating himself king of cinematic sauce), he wasn't exactly slouching through the '80s. His 1983 Dutch film *The Fourth Man* revelled in its sexually explicit imagery, while his first English-language film, *Flesh + Blood* (1985), didn't skimp on nudity as Jennifer Jason Leigh is ravaged by Rutger Hauer's merciless lieutenant.

Back in Hollywood, a megastar was born when Richard Gere took on the title role in *American Gigolo* (1982). After small parts in *Looking For Mr Goodbar* (1977) and *Days Of Heaven* (1978), he landed a Theatre World Award for playing a gay Holocaust survivor in Broadway show *Bent* before director Paul Schrader put him on the map with *Gigolo*. As an LA escort who gets caught up in a murder investigation, Gere also became an early champion of equal rights nudity when he went full frontal for the role.

"I wanted to immerse myself in all of that," Gere recalls. "So I just dove in. If I recall, [the nudity] wasn't in the script. It was just in the natural process of making the movie. I certainly felt vulnerable, but I think it's different for men than women."

Not half. While Gere approached *Gigolo*'s fleshy subject matter philosophically, Kim Basinger describes her experiences on the steamy drama *9½ Weeks* somewhat differently. Though the film lit her star in the same way *Gigolo* hoisted Gere's, Basinger found the experience overwhelming.

"It was like an earthquake in my life," she said of her audition, in which director Adrian Lyne asked her to act out a scene as a grovelling prostitute. She didn't fare any better

on set, as Basinger's director instructed her co-workers to ignore her and spread rumours about the actress, all in an elaborate attempt to draw a suitably fractured performance from her.

"I knew if I got through this it would make me stronger, wiser," Basinger said at the time. "I felt disgust, humiliation, but when you go against your grain you know emotions you never knew you had will surface." It worked. Though she and Rourke never became best friends, the pair's smouldering encounters – including that kitchen scene – never fail to thrill, and helped turn the film into a mega-hit at the box office (where it made \$106m).

While Basinger shied away from raunchy roles after that (eventually landing her highest-profile gig in 1989's *Batman*), Gere became the go-to hunk for sexy dramas, including a remake of *Breathless* (1983) and, before that, *An Officer And A Gentleman* (1982). "It was a terrific script and a really hard-edged, blue collar love story," says director Taylor Hackford. "It's so funny to me know when people tell me how tender and soft it was, because it's not! It was full of sex and profanity and was about very gritty, edgy people."

On the flipside, Rourke became the anti-Gere, bringing raw, ungentlemanly energy to films like *Angel Heart* (1987) and 1989's *Wild Orchid* (in which he was rumoured to have done the deed for real with his off and on-screen lover Carré Otis). And before stripping off with Basinger in *9½ Weeks*, he played a supporting role opposite Kathleen Turner in *Body Heat* (1981).

Making her cinematic debut, Turner's husky drawl and screen siren looks as no-nonsense lawyer Matty captured movie-lovers' imaginations – and signalled a shift in the gender power paradigm in the same year the Convention On



The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women came into force (something 1987's *Fatal Attraction* played to a nightmarish extreme).

"That whole thing was so thrilling, so exciting to me," Turner reveals of her debut. "When I first read the script, I remember thinking, 'My God, nobody's done anything to this extent before.' This is really groundbreaking, I think, in American filmmaking, the extent of the sexuality and the power of the sexuality." That feminine power was key to the film. "[Matty] could make someone do what she wanted done," Turner says. "She's really quite cold-blooded about it. It's kind of cool."

Also at the cutting edge of erotica were films like *Cruising* (1980), in which Al Pacino plays a cop who goes undercover at a gay S&M club, and the lesbian-tinged *Personal Best* (1982), both released in the years when LGBT issues were making headlines thanks to the AIDS crisis. And crazier sex prevailed in films like *Videodrome* (1983), *Blue Velvet* (1986) and 1985's *Re-Animator* (Barbara Crampton does it with a decapitated head), while teen comedies entered a new phase of surprisingly risqué flesh-baring.

Hollywood's obsession with sex continued into the '90s, but it was the '80s that birthed the erotic thriller as we know it. We'll leave it to Verhoeven to explain the obsession. "Sex isn't only sex; it's communication," he says.

"It's interesting for the storytelling, the way these people touch each other. It's this intense communication of giving yourself away." Is it just us, or has it gotten a bit hot in here? 🍷



Blind love: Kim Basinger in *9½ Weeks*, (top) Nancy Allen in *Dressed To Kill*, Richard Gere smoulders in *American Gigolo*

"THE NUDITY WAS A NATURAL PART OF THE MOVIE"

RICHARD GERE



EROTIC



FATAL ATTRACTION

Adrian Lyne's audacious 1987 sexual thriller broke the mould, boiled the bunny and prodded controversy. Almost 30 years later, it's still a movie that won't be ignored...

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM



Some films are hits; others become a phenomenon. Take *Fatal Attraction*. Adrian Lyne's 1987 thriller about a married man who sees a weekend dalliance turn into the stuff of nightmares had audiences literally screaming at the screen. Cries of, "Punch the bitch's face in. Kill her already. Kill the bitch!" rang out in theatres across America. A male chorus, shocked by what they saw, reacted with the only thing they had: vitriol. Only bested by *Three Men And A Baby* at the US box-office that year, *Fatal Attraction* didn't just touch a nerve; it stuck a nine-inch kitchen knife in it.

Brian De Palma called it "a post-feminist AIDS thriller". David Mamet felt it was anti-women and fearful of sex. Oprah Winfrey devoted a show to real-life fatal attractions. In the first week of its US release, seven out of 10 patients with marriage problems discussed the film during sessions with a Manhattan psychoanalyst.

Lyne, who sneaked into one public screening to record the violent reactions, remembers the hysteria only too well. "I had men ring me up and say, 'Thanks a million, buddy. You've ruined it for us.'" The British director already had enough enemies without attracting further attention. A former commercials director, Lyne's Hollywood track record proved sex could sell. He peddled female flesh in his 1983 dance-fantasy *Flashdance* before following it with *9½ Weeks*, in which Kim Basinger and Mickey Rourke indulged in a sado-masochistic affair.

Yet *Fatal Attraction* was different; this was no softcore erotica, no proto-*Fifty Shades Of Grey*. Rather, it was a story every adult could relate to – married, divorced or single.

After packing his wife Beth (Anne Archer) and six-year-old daughter Ellen off to the country for the weekend, lawyer Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) encounters single woman Alex Forrest (Glenn Close), a book editor working for the publishers his firm represents. They have a fling – one night spills into two. And then Alex begins to unravel.

"It works because this has happened to everybody," commented Ned Tanen, then president of the film's studio backers Paramount Pictures. "Every woman has had the guy she's broken up with park across the street and stare at her door. Every guy has had someone call at two in the morning and hang up." Only Alex takes it to the extreme. She slices her wrists as a desperate cry for help. She begins to call Dan's house when he refuses to take her calls at the office. Then the abuse really starts... from throwing acid on the bonnet of his Volvo to kidnapping Ellen for a rather symbolic rollercoaster ride.

As *Village Voice* critic J. Hoberman put it, "It's a film stunned by the power of love to make people disrupt their lives, lose control, suffer delirium, forget who they are, leap into the abyss." Arriving when AIDS was causing society to turn its back on promiscuous sex, to re-embrace the traditional nuclear family, Alex Forrest became The Most Hated Woman In America, as one publication dubbed her. It even coined the phrase "bunny boiler" – soon to become common parlance for any unhinged singleton – in reference to Alex's most infamous moment, when she cruelly kills Ellen's pet rabbit.

Fresh from playing his intrepid adventurer in *Romancing The Stone* and its sequel, for Michael Douglas, Basil Dearden's script was heaven-sent. "The plot is

FATAL ATTRACTION



Dangerous liaison: (clockwise from top left) Adrian Lyne gives direction, Glenn Close and Michael Douglas, sexual chemistry between Close and Douglas, Alex's cry-for-help.

a reminder that while 99 times out of 100 you get away with cheating on your wife or income tax, there may be one nasty time when you have to be responsible for your actions," he says.

While Lyne originally thought of casting Isabelle Adjani, Glenn Close was desperate to play Alex Forrest, to move away from the saintly image she'd cultivated in films like *The World According To Garp* and *The Natural*. She told her agents she'd even audition for the role – quite a comedown for a then three-time Oscar nominee. Flying in from New York, she was a wreck, she remembers: "I got so nervous I took a little bit of Valium." It didn't help that Douglas was in the room, sitting behind a video camera. Saying to herself "just let it all go wild", she went for it. "It was like lunacy unearthed," says Lyne.

Alex came to define the 1980s single white female; the woman who had put work before family. Lyne even spent time researching their surroundings – looking at dozens of Polaroid shots of studio flats belonging to single women. "They were a little sad, if you want me to be honest," he recalls. "They lacked soul." It was in Alex's lair that Lyne managed to craft one of the most memorable sex scenes of the decade, with Alex propped up on the sink.

Close admits those scenes were exhilarating. "Michael and I just plunged into them. It was almost a catharsis for me. When it was over I remember how odd it was to feel so positive about something I'd believed was potentially disturbing."

"Sex is not easy to do in movies, and everybody's a judge," adds

Douglas, who completed his so-called "sex trilogy" in the '90s with *Basic Instinct* and *Disclosure*.

Six months after its US release, by which point the film was closing in on a \$320m global box office, *Fatal Attraction* was nominated for six Oscars, including Best Picture for producers Stanley R. Jaffe and Sherry Lansing, Best Director for Lyne and Best Screenplay for Dearden. Close and Archer were both up for Best Actress/Supporting Actress, respectively. But the film came away with nothing – beaten in all its categories by either *Moonstruck* or *The Last Emperor*. Arguably, the conflicting opinions the film threw up divided Academy voters as much as the public and the press.

In Lyne's eyes, the film was never intended as anti-feminist nor did it set out to advocate marriage or family values (despite the final, telling shot of the Gallagher group photo). "I didn't mean any sort of moral stance at all," he argues. But what it did do was provoke debate, from workplace watercoolers to op-ed columns, tapping into what *Time* magazine called "the current mood of sexual malaise". One thing's certain though: it's a classic cautionary tale. "It's saying you do have a responsibility for your actions," says Lansing, "because they have consequences." And they can be fatal. 🚫

'I HAD MEN RING ME UP AND SAY, "THANKS A MILLION BUDDY. YOU'VE RUINED IT FOR US"'

ADRIAN LYNE

VITAL STATS

YEAR 1987

DIRECTOR Adrian Lyne

SCREENPLAY James Dearden

CAST Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, Anne Archer, Ellen Hamilton Latzen, Stuart Pankin, Ellen Foley

BUDGET \$14m

BOX OFFICE \$320m

RUNNING TIME 119 minutes

DISTRIBUTOR Paramount Pictures

TAGLINE "On the other side of drinks, dinner and a one night stand, lies a terrifying love story."

RELEASE DATE 19 September 1987

REWIND

FROM THE
ARCHIVES
ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED
IN 2015

BACK TO THE '80s

Just because the '80s are over doesn't mean they're *over*. In fact, they've never been more alive...

WORDS JOSH WINNING

Forget what the history books say – the '80s didn't end in 1989. Take a quick look at the movies released in the early '90s and you'll see that, in cinema at least, the party went on with a never-ending stream of sequels to '80s hits (*Back To The Future Part III*, *Terminator 2*, *Die Hard 2*, *Lethal Weapon 3*). And instead of fading to black when the Noughties arrived, the past decade and a bit has seen the popularity of all things '80s sky-rocketing.

While dress-up events like the Prince Charles' *Labyrinth* Masquerade Ball and Secret Cinema's *Back To The Future* super-event have given audiences the chance to travel back in time and embrace butterfly-bellied nostalgia, the '80s live on in filmmaking, too. They've become an aesthetic all their own thanks to those shoulder pads, fist-pumping dance floor anthems and adrenaline-fuelled action sequences. And with the kids of the '80s now making their own movies, the decade the fashion police forgot is being championed anew by the likes of JJ Abrams, Nicolas Winding Refn, Adam Wingard and James Gunn.

"There is probably no film that influenced me more as a child – no film that excited me more or that I loved more – than *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*,"

says Gunn, whose *Guardians Of The Galaxy* and its sequel feature '80s tunes, and tip their fedoras lovingly to Indiana Jones, not least in Chris Pratt's roguish hero Star-Lord. "*Raiders* not only influences how I see *Guardians*," Gunn adds, "it influences how I live my life – which means the way for a woman to win my heart is to paint 'love you' on her eyelids."

Such is the love for filmmakers like Steven Spielberg and John Carpenter that their surnames have evolved into adjectives. 'Spielbergian' describes a kid-centric film that swells with heart and humour, while a 'Carpenter-esque horror' is a scare flick that's stylish, spare and features a killer synth soundtrack. Spielberg's shadow is particularly long. "I remember seeing Steven Spielberg's films," says Paul Thomas Anderson. "I thought I'd make films like his."

Though Anderson went on to carve his own niche in the filmic landscape (see *There Will Be Blood*,

Magnolia), one director who has followed resolutely in Spielberg's footsteps is JJ Abrams. Having worked for Spielberg as a kid – restoring old 8mm reels for the princely sum of \$300 – Abrams' 2011 film *Super 8* is a loving ode to classics like *E.T.* and *The Goonies*, following a band of kids (admittedly, in 1979) whose town is invaded by a malevolent alien. With its lens flares, teen banter and heart-on-sleeve humour, it could have been shot by Spielberg himself (The Beard did act as the film's producer).

"The initial conceit was not 'do a Spielbergian movie'," Abrams says. "I didn't think: 'Oh, let's start ripping off other Spielberg films.' It was just: 'This is a story that could be cool.'" More than anything, Abrams seems interested in recapturing the sense of wonder that Spielberg's films so effortlessly inspired. "What Steven Spielberg has in his work is a sense of unlimited possibility," adds Abrams.

**'SPIELBERG FILMS HAVE
A SENSE OF UNLIMITED
POSSIBILITY'** JJ ABRAMS



Retro love: Dan Stevens in *The Guest*, (top right), horror flick *You're Next*, the *Super 8* kids, Chris Pratt in *Guardians Of The Galaxy*



"The sense that life could bring you anything, that around every corner could be something amazing."

It's interesting, though, that Spielberg himself struggled to recapture exactly that feeling in his fourth Indiana Jones film, *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*, which debuted in 2008 to lukewarm reviews that suggested he should've left Indy in the '80s. Meanwhile, the remake of *Poltergeist* (Spielberg wrote and produced the 1982 original, though he wasn't involved in the 2015 version) hasn't exactly been embraced as a genre classic ("very tame, but saved from the remake scrapheap by Sam Rockwell's surprisingly touching performance" was *Total Film*'s verdict).

In fact, '80s horror has been wantonly pillaged by greedy Hollywood execs in recent years, with nary a big brand name spared during the onslaught of glossy, often PG-rated 'modernised' horror flicks. If the '80s did anything better than any other era, it was forge high concepts that lend themselves to franchise-building, and it's small wonder that the past decade has seen studios returning to those concepts in search of reboot material and, if they're successful, the rebirth of entire franchises.

Poltergeist is just the latest to receive the reboot treatment. Who could forget Hayden Panettiere's >>



REWIND

breathless monologue in *Scream 4* (2011), which highlighted the remake pandemic? While the likes of *RoboCop*, *Clash Of The Titans* and *Karate Kid* have all been cranked through the remake machine, it's the horror genre that has provided the most material for reboot-happy filmmakers. *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, *Friday The 13th*, *Prom Night*, *The Fog* – all received lacklustre redos that failed to set the box office (or reviews columns) alight.

And when reboots just wouldn't cut it, films were set in the 1980s instead, with far better results. As early as 1998, *The Wedding Singer* cast a nostalgic glance over its shoulder, quickly followed by *Adventureland* (2009), *American Psycho* (1999), *Wet Hot American Summer* (2001), and, uh, *Glitter* (2001). Most notable, perhaps, was *Hot Tub Time Machine* (2012), which scored a casting coup with '80s poster-child John Cusack, playing a grown man who ends up travelling back to the 1980s and encountering his younger self. Cusack, though, is proof that some don't see the '80s through rose-tinted Ray-Bans.

"It's like those high-school yearbook photos that everyone would rather not see: 'Oh my God, look at that mullet hair,'" he says. "I have those photos too, but for me, they're, like, entire movies. And they show them on cable." Adds *Pretty In Pink* and *The Breakfast Club* star Molly Ringwald: "They were fun to make and there hasn't been anything like them since." It's a sentiment Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone no doubt sympathise with – their *Expendables* films failed to tap into the free-wheeling sense of '80s action fun, no doubt because they applied dated '80s conventions too liberally.

The key, it seems, is to utilise that neon-rinsed '80s aesthetic to create something new. A fine example is Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011). With its synth score, candy-pop cinematography and cool-as-shit anti-hero (Ryan Gosling), it's every bit the modern-day '80s action flick. It resembles the films of Michael Mann and Walter Hill, but Refn insists *Drive* was really "born out of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales more than anything else". Tellingly, he also cites '80s demi-god John Hughes as a massive influence. "I'm a child of the '80s," Refn says, "so I used to regularly see his movies, and I love all of them. They had a real impact on me at the time, and they still do."



Hot wheels:
Ryan Gosling
is a cool dude
in *Drive*

'JOHN HUGHES MOVIES HAD A REAL IMPACT ON ME'

NICOLAS WINDING REFN

Meanwhile, director Adam Wingard – whose films *The Guest* and *You're Next* both celebrate the '80s – reasons it's not enough for films to simply replicate golden oldies; they have to do something new. "You can't just imitate the '80s style because it's not the '80s anymore," he says. "There are great things about the '80s that you can carry over now... but at the same time, we're still doing our own thing and utilising all of the advancements of film style and technology that's happened since the '80s."

Nostalgia is a powerful filmmaking tool, which goes part way to explaining why the '80s has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity. Everybody wants to reclaim that sense of wonder so often associated with '80s movies, including the guys making movies today. *Guardians Of The Galaxy* director James Gunn remains pragmatic about Spielberg's positive influence on his Marvel movie.

"I wanted to make a movie that wasn't necessarily like those films, but that made people feel like those films made me feel as a child," he muses. What more could you ask for? 🍿



Past lives: John
Cusack heads
back to the
'80s in *Hot Tub
Time Machine*

OUT OF THE '80s

Five franchises still fighting fit...



TRANSFORMERS

After making their debut in 1984, the robots in disguise are still doing big business thanks to Michael Bay. The fifth film in the series was released in June 2017.



GHOSTBUSTERS

Dan Aykroyd wants a threequel to his 1984 smash, but 2016 brought fans an all-female 'reimagining' directed by Paul Feig and starring Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy.



PREDATOR

Robert Rodriguez's 2010 sequel *Predators* wasn't embraced by fans, but writer/director Shane Black has promised his new *Predator* will be a direct sequel to the Arnie film.



TERMINATOR

It's been over 30 years since Arnie promised he'd be back, and in 2015, he returned for a third go in *Terminator: Genisys*. This time around, his creaky old T-800 has grey hair.



FRIDAY THE 13TH

The 2009 reboot went down like a chained-up Jason Voorhees, but another reboot's already in the pipeline. You just can't keep a good slasher down, apparently.

80s MOVIES

THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION

The 80s was a time of big hair, bold colours and bad fashion, but it also brought us some bona fide cinematic classics. Join us as we rediscover some of the coolest, funniest, scariest and weirdest movies of the 1980s



FEATURING STALLONE VS SCHWARZENEGGER • 30 YEARS OF THE LOST BOYS
THE BEST MOVIES OF THE '80s • THE RISE AND FALL OF RIVER PHOENIX
THE KINGS OF '80s COMEDY • BACK TO THE FUTURE • ROBOCOP • GREMLINS
A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

